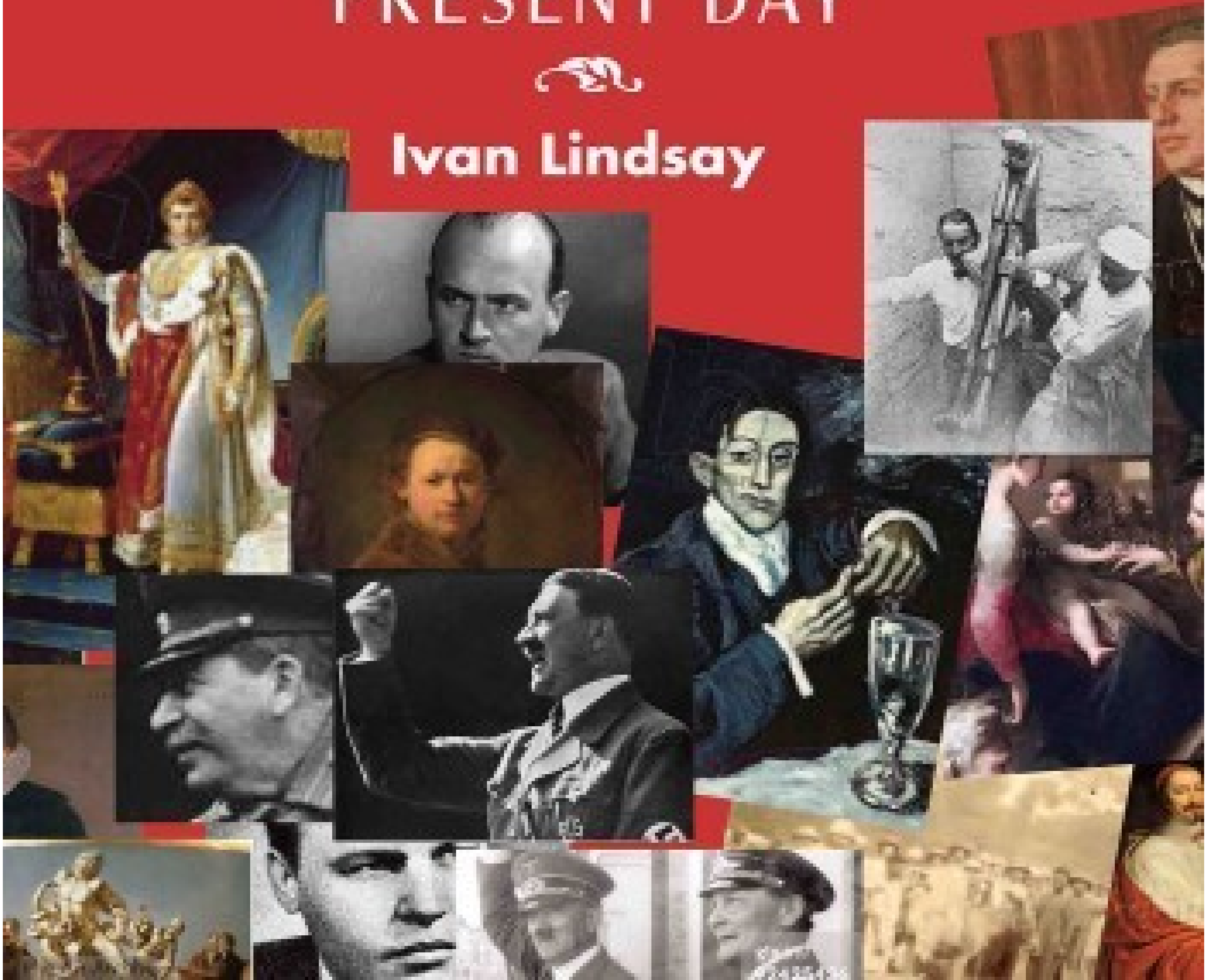
THE HISTORY OF
Loot and Stolen Art

FROM ANTIQUITY UNTIL THE PRESENT DAY

Ivan Lindsay



Title page

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Frontispiece

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Principal players

Sargon II - ruled Syria between 721 and 705 BC

Nebuchadnezzar II - King of Babylon 630-562 BC

Cyrus the Great (*c.* 600-530 BC) - King of Persia

Dionysus of Syracuse (*c.* 430-367 BC)

Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) - King of Macedonia

Mithridates - King of Pontus 120-63 BC

Nero - Roman Emperor 54-68 BC

Caligula - Roman Emperor 37-41 BC

Pope St Gregory the Great (540-604)

St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

Enrico Dandolo - Doge of Venice (1193-1205)

Cesare Borgia (*c.* 1475-?) powerful in Renaissance Rome, sacked Urbino

Francisco Pizarro Gonzales (*c.* 1471-1541) - Spanish conquistador, defeated the Incan Empire

Hernan (aka Fernando and Hernando) Cortes (1485-1547) - Spanish conquistador, defeated the Aztec Empire

Francis Drake (1539-1596) - Elizabethan sailor and navigator, looted much treasure from the Spanish and defeated the Spanish Armada

Grotius (1583-1645) - codified international law, made warfare part of a legal system and established rules concerning war booty

Albrecht von Wallenstein (1583-1634) - led the forces of the Imperial and Holy Roman Empire against Gustavus of Sweden

Gustav Adolf II (1594-1632) - better known by the Latinised name Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden 1611-1632

Christina (1626-1689) - Queen of Sweden, 1632-1654

Charles X (1622-1660) - King of Sweden 1654-1660

Charles XI (1655-1697) - King of Sweden

Rudolf II (1552-1612) - King of Hungary, King of Bohemia, Archduke of Austria and Holy Roman Emperor

Johann Tserclaes, Count of Tilly (1559-1632) - led the forces of the Imperial and Holy Roman Empire against Gustavus

Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) - English soldier and statesman, responsible for King Charles I's execution. Ruled as Lord Protector of the new republic from 1653 to 1658. Responsible for breaking up the Royal Collection

Charles I (1600-1649) - King of England 1625-1649, assembled the Royal Collection

Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) - founder of British Museum

Baron Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825) - leading member of Napoleon's Scientific and Artistic Commission who later became Director of the Musée Napoleon

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord (1754-1838) - one of the most influential and cunning European diplomats of the Napoleonic era

Thomas Bruce (1766-1841) - 7th Earl of Elgin, 11th Earl of Kincardine, responsible for removing statues from the Acropolis (the Elgin marbles)

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) - Emperor of France, great military leader, conquering much of Europe

Bernardino Drovetti (1776-1852) - archaeologist working for the French in Egypt

William Richard Hamilton, (1777-1859) - Elgin's secretary; also responsible for bringing the Rosetta Stone to England

Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778-1823) - archaeologist acting for the English in Egypt, famous for his feats of engineering when moving huge statues

Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890) - German looter of Egypt

Garnet Joseph Wolseley (1833-1913) - distinguished Victorian soldier, commanded the Ashanti campaign

Harry Holdsworth Rawson (1843-1910) - Victorian soldier, commanded the Benin campaign

Sir Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge (1857-1934) - Keeper of Antiquities at the British Museum 1894-1924

Ludwig Borchardt (1863-1938) - German Egyptologist, responsible for the controversy over the bust of Nerfertiti

George Edward Stanhope Molyneux Herbert, 5th Earl of Carnarvon (1866-1923) - backed Carter in his Egyptian digs

Howard Carter (1874-1939) - English archaeologist, discoverer of Tutankhamen's tomb

Joseph Stalin (1879-1953) - leader of the Soviet Union against the Nazis

Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) - German Führer, Nazi leader

Hermann Goering (1893-1946) - second in the Nazi ranking, Reichsmarschall, and Chief of the Luftwaffe

Preface

This book aims to present an alternative history of the Western world. Almost all the figures in it are known on the stage of world history. Most of them are also known as conquerors, confiscators (the old fashioned word for looting) and ruthless administrators of the regions they created as a result of their conquests. Yet to draw on and ultimately concentrate on the history of looting in one volume seems never to have been attempted before.

Although much has been written on these individuals, especially those who lived more recently such as Napoleon and Hitler, and some of their looting has been covered in passing, this is the first effort at drawing together the apparently disparate threads that make up this story.

Whereas in the times of early man conflict can be understood by the need to acquire necessities by force to avoid starvation, this book begins at the dawn of written history when conquerors began taking goods that were not necessities but rather signified power over the vanquished and an increase in their own material wealth.

In ancient times most booty consisted of what is now called treasure such as gold and silver whose removal both diminished the status of the vanquished and gave the conqueror funds to employ armies and build symbols of power such as castles and palaces. This contrasts with more modern times where armies such as Napoleon's did not want to impoverish the peoples they conquered, as that would destroy the tax base, but rather just remove their artworks that had been accumulated over the centuries.

In the case of paintings, the looting of which the Napoleonic, Nazi and Soviet regimes were all adept, the artworks or treasure had no intrinsic value, but an immense perceived value for the status of those regimes. The Napoleonic French intended and largely succeeded in making the Louvre the greatest museum of its time. Hitler was acutely aware of the prestige attached to owning impressive artworks, and his primary ambition was to turn his hometown of Linz into a museum-filled metropolis that would surpass the reputation of London and Paris. Indeed, it can be argued that, despite hiding behind legalities, the real reason the British Museum in London does not want to return the Elgin Marbles to Greece is the loss of prestige their removal would entail for London.

There has also always been a counter movement to this apparently essential part of the human condition. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition Matthew 6:19 says, 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal'. This concept is also found in the ancient world, for example when the Greek philosopher Solon advised Croesus, King of Lydia that, in spite of his great riches, he would only be truly content in death. It was therefore, as we shall see, an irony that the accumulated riches of Byzantine Christianity were to become such a target for the Crusaders, although their nominal enemy was Islam.

The narrative that follows in this book brings together all these threads of the acquisition of material goods by force. It is not simply a story of human greed, as that implies the acquisition of the goods superfluous to real needs. Many of the original looters such as Alexander the Great looted through necessity to avoid the bankruptcy of their country. Many later thieves, looted to aggrandize either themselves, such as Hitler, or their country, such as Napoleon or Stalin. The different motivation of the greatest looters in history is a theme that is examined throughout the book.

In many ways this subject is on-going. Some artworks such as the famous Horses of St Mark's in Venice have been looted many times. Some artworks stolen many years before are still subject to claims and counter-claims of ownership today. When standing in front of *The Artist's Studio* by Vermeer (itself the subject of a restitution claim by the Czernin family today) in the Kunsthistoriche Museum in Vienna, most feel a 'frisson', knowing the painting was first coveted by Hitler before he acquired it by means, albeit dubious, that had a veneer of legality.

Wherever in the world today there are treasures to be found, mainly in museums both great and small, one doesn't normally have to look very far to find evidence of looting. Whilst famous examples of looted artworks such as the Benin Bronzes and Elgin Marbles in the British Museum in London are well known and are often seen to be a continued injustice, there are countless smaller examples which intrigue, mystify and tantalise and ultimately symbolise man's turbulent history.

Introduction

'Vae Victis!'

- Brennus, Chief of the Sennones, on conquering Rome in 387 BC[1]

Coveting the goods and property of one's neighbour appears to be wired into human DNA and is probably an evolutionary trait that is indistinguishable from man trying to improve his life and surroundings. Historians have tended to overlook looting as a powerful motivation behind some of the expansionist plans of history's leading warlords.

As early as the Roman period, contemporary historians commented on how the acquisition of gold and artworks was an acceptable reason for an invasion by an ambitious general of the Imperial army seeking a 'Triumph', whereby he could parade his spolia through the streets of Rome. Napoleon was driven to loot art that would enhance the reputation of France, and Hitler's planned super-museum at Linz underpinned the planning of the Nazi expansion.

The bible says in Exodus 20:17, 'You should not covet your neighbour's house. You should not set your heart on your neighbour's wife, or slave, man or woman, or ox, or donkey, or any of your neighbour's possessions'. Many early Christian thinkers, such as St John Cassian (360-435), Pope St Gregory the Great (540-604) and St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), struggled to understand man's desire for his neighbour's goods. The bible lists Greed and Envy as two of the seven deadly sins, and Dante describes them as an excessive love of earthly goods.

Throughout recorded history, armies have attacked and removed property. Sargon II ruled Syria between 721 and 705 BC from his palace at Dur-Sharrukin near modern-day Mosul in Iraq and conquered most of the eastern Mediterranean, removing all religious artefacts, works of art, archives, military banners, musical instruments, armour, gold and silver. From one temple complex in the city of Musasir alone, he removed one ton of gold, five tons of silver and 334,000 objects.

Nebuchadnezzar II (630-562 BC), King of Babylon, sacked Jerusalem in 587 BC, enslaving the Jewish population and emptying the Temple of Solomon of all its gold (2 Kings 24:13). He then rebuilt his capital of Babylon, populating the Hanging Gardens (one of the seven wonders of the ancient world) with Persian trees and plants to remind his homesick wife Amytis of her native land.

The early Greeks showed respectful behaviour towards the statues of defeated foes so as not to offend the gods, but by the Hellenistic period wide-scale looting had become prevalent. Dionysus of Syracuse (*c.* 430-367 BC) drove the Carthaginians out of Sicily before removing the gold mantle of Zeus from the temple of Zeus Olympios at Akragas, as well as statues, gold objects and the gold crowns from statues' heads.

Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) financed his campaigns by looting, and emptied the Persian treasuries of Susa, Sardis and Persepolis of over 4500 tons of gold. During the Fourth Crusade Doge Enrico Dandolo sacked and looted Constantinople in 1196, filling the treasury of St Mark's Basilica in Venice with Byzantine treasure, where it remains today. In the Renaissance, princes regularly raided each other, such as in 1502 when Cesare Borgia sacked Urbino, reserving the statues for Isabella D'Este.

Henry VIII emptied the English monasteries in the 1530s, and the Spanish adventurers Francisco Pizarro and Hernan Cortes subjugated the Incan and Aztec empires before shipping their gold to Spain, although some was intercepted by Sir Francis Drake. In the seventeenth century, Sweden, under King Gustavus Adolphus, pillaged Northern Europe in the Thirty Years War before his daughter, Queen Christina, stole over 1000 paintings from the late Rudolf II in Prague in 1649. Napoleon financed his campaigns by looting, and stole artworks from Egypt, Italy, Spain and Germany, forcing the vanquished to sign treaties such as the Treaty of Tolentino with the Vatican in 1797.

Between 1939 and 1945, Germany removed 592,48 tons of gold from occupied countries and looted an estimated 20 per cent of Europe's artworks. Hitler's henchman, Hermann Goering, had over 1500 paintings at his country estate Karinhall, and 6000 paintings were reserved for Hitler's intended Fuhrermuseum at Linz in Austria. When the Russian advance started finding German depositories of art in salt mines and monasteries in 1944, Stalin gave the order for them to be removed. Over three million objects were taken to Russia where, except for some items returned to Dresden in 1956 (then under Russian control), they have remained. In 2000 the Russians passed a law in the Duma that states that, since Russia did not start the war, and lost 25 million people, the art they 'rescued' can be compensation.

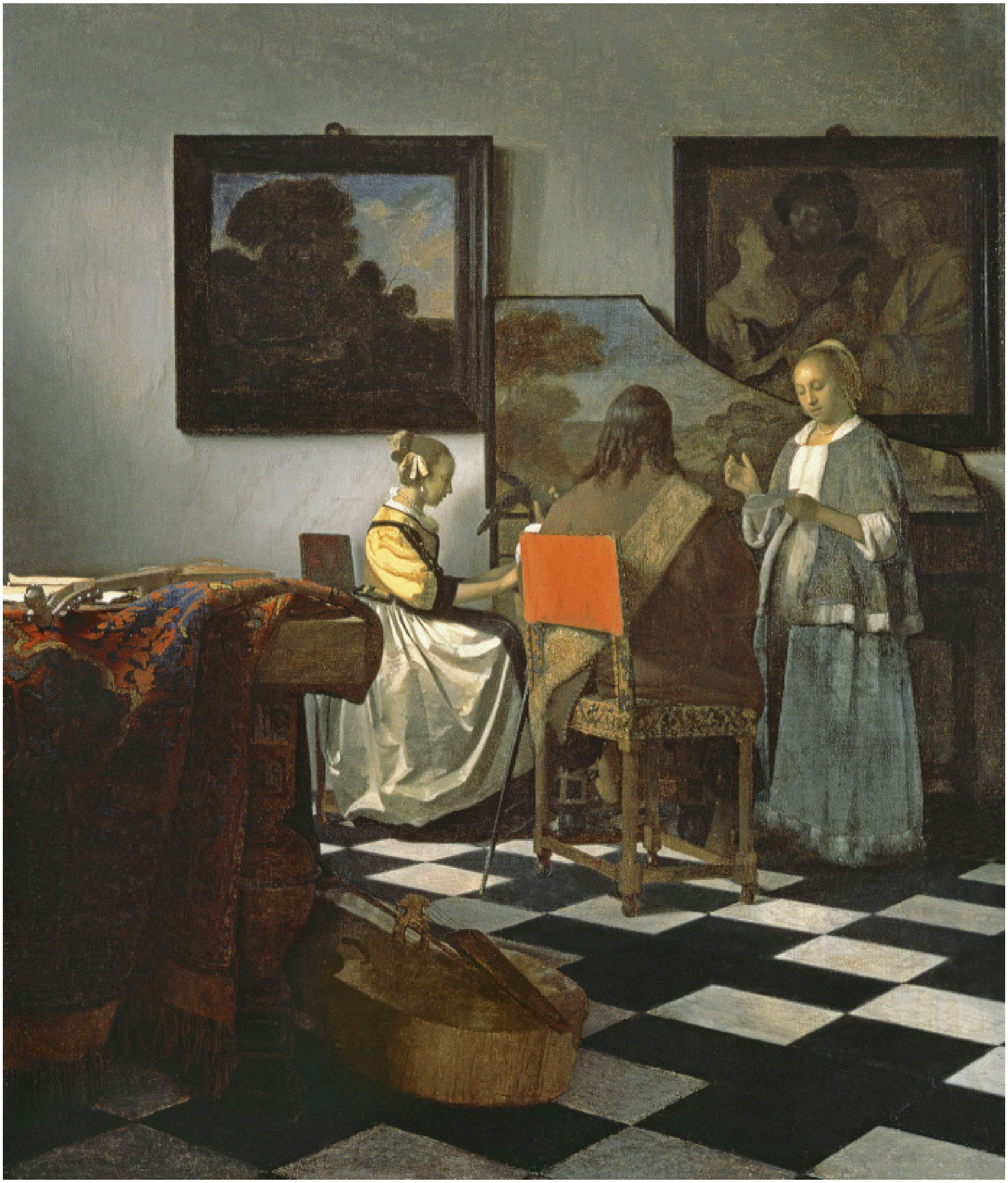
Art theft has continued apace since WWII. Interpol has had a dedicated department for art theft since 1947 and its list of stolen artworks now contains over 30,000 items. The top 50 most valuable paintings on this list include works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Caravaggio, Rubens, Picasso, Renoir, van Gogh and Monet. The London-based Art Loss Register lists over 180,000 missing items including 182 Warhols and 569 Picassos, and its chairman, Julian Radcliffe, calculates that round 3% of works on the art market at any one time have been stolen.

These masterpieces have been described as the 'Museum of the Missing'. Although there might be a mastermind enjoying his collection in a bunker somewhere in Russia or South America, Radcliffe quickly scotches this favourite fantasy, saying that, in over 2000 cases he has investigated, only two were not stolen for financial gain, and yet many masterpieces stolen in the last 20 years seem to have simply disappeared into thin air.

This book also examines the restitution of loot and artworks and how ideas have changed over time. Although the Romans first institutionalised the removal of plunder as legitimate for the victor, they distinguished between removing artworks and gold from a defeated enemy and stealing property from enemies or allies outside of war.

In the first century BC the young Roman prosecutor Marcus Tullius Cicero made his name by prosecuting the Sicilian Governor, Gaius Verres, for looting Sicily. In his opening speech he said, 'The charge against Gaius Verres is that during a period of three years he has laid waste the province of Sicily: that he has plundered Sicilian communities, stripped bare Sicilian homes, and pillaged Sicilian temples. Here before you, here with their tale of wrong, stand the whole Sicilian people'.[2] Cicero examined many of the questions that have plagued art restitution ever since, such as: Who should own art? Why do we value art? Does art have a fixed location where it belongs? What should happen during times of war? When should victors be allowed to keep art and when not?

Roman legal thinking and Cicero's codification of Roman law have influenced restitution and been used to prosecute looters ever since. In the 1780s Edmund Burke made extensive use of the Verrines (Cicero's lectures in the Verres case) in his prosecution of Warren Hastings for extortion in India. In 1996, nearly 2000 years after Cicero's speeches on behalf of the Sicilians, Edgar Bronfman, Chairman of the World Jewish Congress, was to make a similar appeal to the US Senate Banking Committee on behalf of the Jewish people, whilst pursuing the Swiss government for alleged crimes during WWII: 'I speak to you today on behalf of the Jewish people. With reverence, I also speak to you on behalf of the six million who cannot speak for themselves'.[3]



The Concert *c.* 1658-60 by Jan Vermeer

For 1500 years the Roman model of 'to the victor the spoils' was considered appropriate and normal. The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 during the Thirty Years War, provided restitution for limited return of property to the Estates of the Holy Roman Empire, but did not force Queen Christina of Sweden to return the extensive collections of Rudolf II of Prague. The Treaty of the Pyrenees of 1659, after intense conflict between Spain and France, dictated specific restitution measures, to be enforced by an international body of arbitrators.

The Congress of Vienna in 1815 returned much of Napoleon's loot to its country of origin and instigated the first major restitution since Cyrus the Great had returned the sacred items to the Temple in Jerusalem after his seizure of Babylon in the fifth century BC. The Congress also developed a legal and ethical framework for the ancient Latin concept of *restitutus*. During the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln asked Dr Francis Lieber of Columbia College, New York to develop a code of conduct to protect cultural, educational and charitable property from looting and destruction. This 'Lieber Code' served as the basis for the 1874 Brussels Conference which declared that cultural property, even when state owned, should be treated as private property and exempted from seizure by an invading army.

Two conferences at The Hague in 1899 and 1907 attempted to regularise the rules of warfare and limit destruction of cultural property, but the laws on looting were flouted in WWI between 1914 and 1918. At the end of the Great War, the Hague Conventions formed the basis for the Allied measures regarding restitution, and in the Versailles Treaty, Article 245, Germany was required to return all, 'trophies, archives, historical souvenirs, or works of art carried away from France by the German authorities in the course of 1870-1871 and during The World War'.[4]

Conferences on restitution continued in the inter-war years at the International Museums Office of the League of Nations as it became clear another conflict was in the air. However, the withdrawal of Japan, Germany and Italy weakened the League and its draft of an 'International Agreement to Protect Arts and Monuments in the Time of War' was ignored by Nazi Germany, which went on a looting rampage only exceeded by the Soviets at the end of WWII. The restitution of Europe's artworks looted during and after WWII is still unfolding and is examined later in this book.

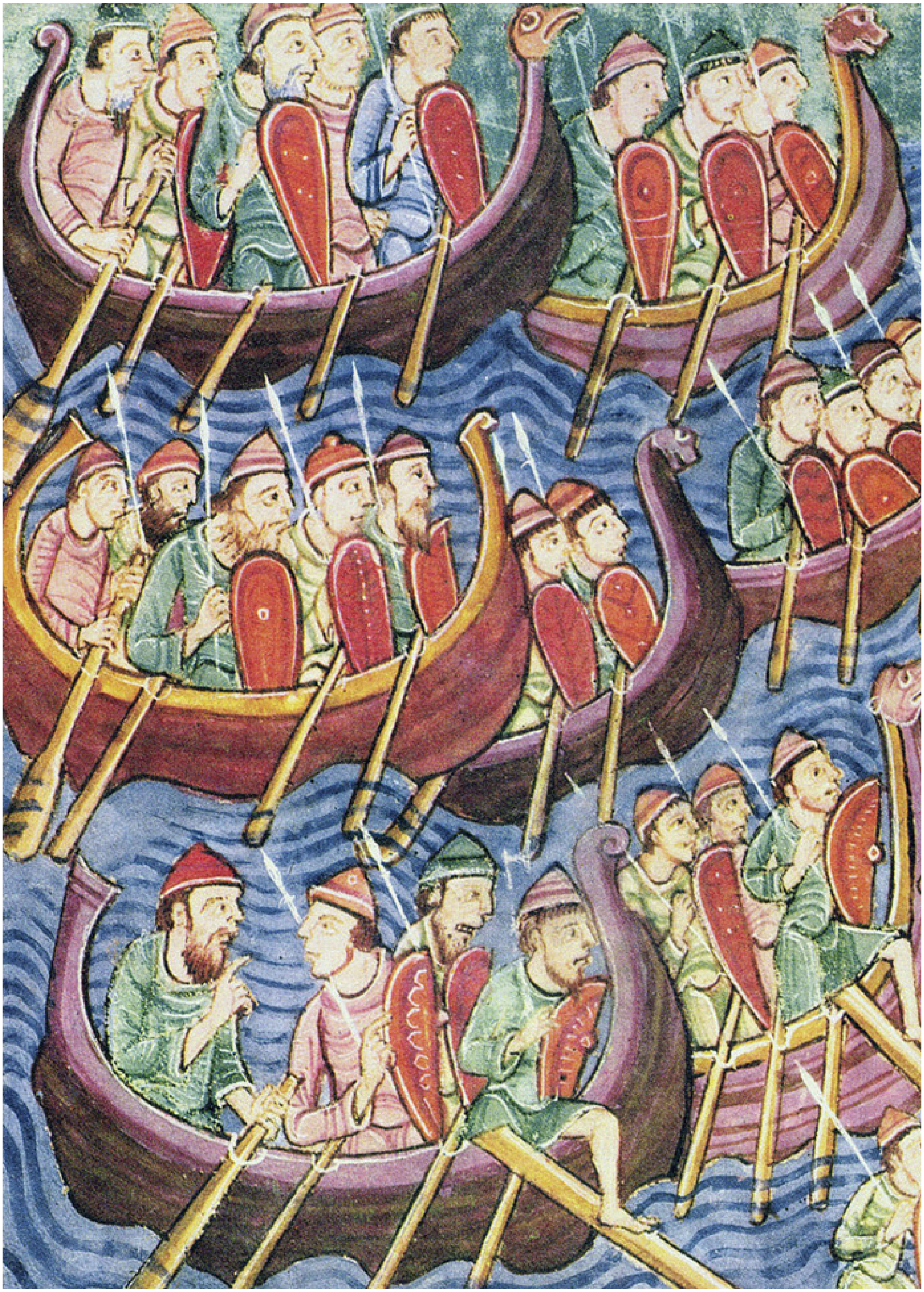
[1] Livius, Titus (Livy), *Ab Urbe Condita,* 5.34-39, traditionally translated as 'Woe to the vanquished' and today generally as 'to the victor the spoils'.

[2] Cicero, Marcus Tullius, *In Caecilium,* div 3.11.

[3] Codevilla, Angelo M., *Between the Alps and a Hard Place, Switzerland in WWII and the Rewriting of History,* Regnery Publishing, 2005, p. 6.

[4] Kurtz, Michael J., *America and the Return of Nazi Contraband - The Recovery of Europe’s Cultural Treasures,* Cambridge University Press, excerpt, Ch. 1, ‘Crisis and Response’, p. 4, http://assets.cambridge.org.

1 - Ancients, Greeks, Romans, Vikings, Moors and Charlemagne



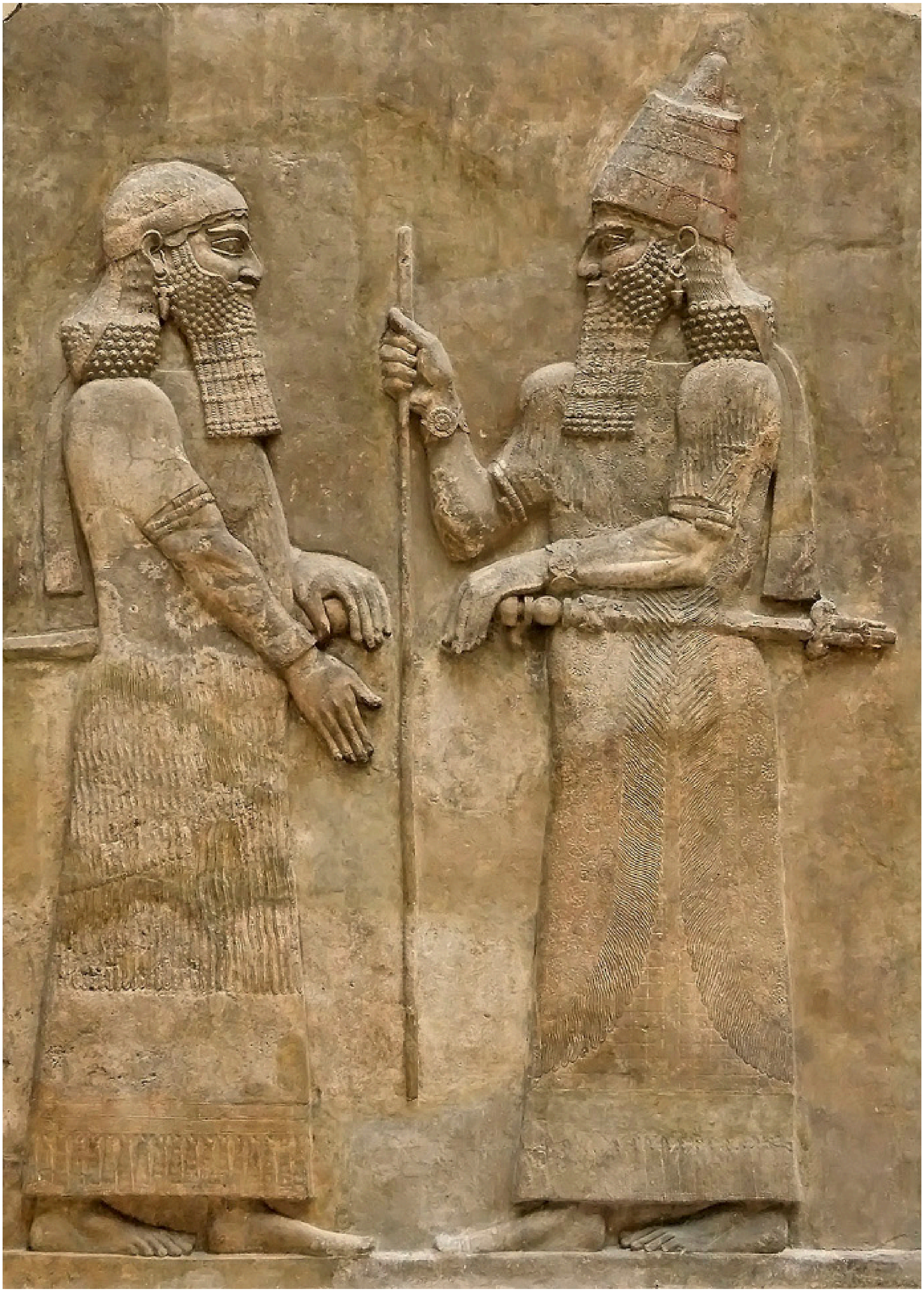
***Detail.* Vikings disembarking in England during the second wave of migration. Scandinavian, 10th-century AD.**

> Meanwhile, after the capture of Syracuse, Marcellus had made a general settlement of affairs in Sicily, and that, too, with such honourable integrity as could not but enhance the dignity of the Roman people as much as it added to his own reputation. This is undeniable: but at the same time he removed to Rome the beautiful statues and paintings which Syracuse possessed in such abundance. These were, one must admit, legitimate spoils, acquired by right of war (*hostium quidem illa spolia et parta belli iure*); nonetheless their removal to Rome was the origin of our admiration of Greek art and started the universal and reckless spoliation of all buildings sacred and profane which prevails today...
>
> \- Livy commentating on the art taken by M. Claudius Marcellus from Syracuse in 211 BC[1]

The first great warrior king to conquer and loot the territory adjacent to his kingdom was the Assyrian king, Sargon II (reigned 721-705 BC). Sargon ruled Assyria from Dur-Sharrukin (‘Fortress of Sargon’) located today at the village of Khorsabad, 15 km north of Mosul in Iraq. A profile relief in the Louvre shows him in conversation with his son, Sennacherib. Sargon is barefoot and wears a decorated sarong, earrings, bracelet and conical hat. His hair and beard are braided with Assyrian knot-work. He holds a staff in one hand and a sword in the other to illustrate his civil and military authority.

Sargon conquered Arpad, Simirra, Damascus, Gaza, Rafah, Carchemish, Izirtu, Sangibatu and Gurgum, establishing the first extensive empire in the western Mediterranean. The bible records his conquest of Ashod in 711 BC in Isaiah 20:1. After Samaria, he conquered Israel and exiled the inhabitants, giving rise to the legend of the lost ten tribes. Sargon enslaved, exiled or killed conquered men. Women were taken back to Assyria and all items of value - religious artefacts, works of art, archives, military banners and symbols, musical instruments, armour, gold and silver - were looted.

In Sargon’s eighth campaign against the kingdom of Urartu in 714 BC, the biblical Ararat in modern-day Eastern Turkey, the king wrote a letter of thanks to the god Ashur, which was later found in the town of Assur and is now in the Louvre. Sargon sacked the Urartian temple of the god Haldi and his wife Bagbartu at the city of Musasir which is now thought to have been just south of Lake Urmia. In the letter the loot described takes up 50 columns, with a total of 334,000 objects, and includes one ton of gold and five tons of silver. The bas reliefs on the walls of the palace at Dur-Sharrukin also showed the looting and battles.



Assyrian King, Sargon II (721-705 BC), giving instructions to a dignitary.

Dur-Sharrukin was first rediscovered by the French consul at Mosul, Paul-Emile Botta, in 1843, thinking he had found Nineveh, he excavated the site from 1842 to 1844 and took the life-size human-headed winged bull *shedu* statues, which weighed 40 tons and guarded one of the entrances, to the Louvre. A relief of the pillaging of Musasir fell into the Tigris and was lost.

American archaeologists from the Oriental Institute in Chicago excavated the site from 1928 to 1935 and in 1928, Edward Chiera unearthed another colossal bull weighing 40 tons. To take it back to Chicago he had it broken into three fragments. It was still too big to fit through certain tunnels in America so it was routed from New York to Chicago via New Orleans. The legality of such a form of looting is a theme throughout this book.

Warfare and looting on an epic scale in the eastern Mediterranean was next conducted by Babylonian ruler, Nebuchadnezzar II (*c.* 630-562 BC). Before Nebuchadnezzar became king in *c.* 605 BC he commanded the Babylonian armies for his father as an accomplished but brutal commander. He defeated the Egyptians at the battle of Carchemish beside the Euphrates in 605 BC. Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns and life are recorded in Cuneiform, Classical, Medieval and Hebrew sources but the most reliable authority is the Babylonian Chronicle, on tablets now housed in the British Museum.

At Carchemish the Chronicle records, 'He crossed the river (to encounter the army of Egypt) which was camped at Carchemish. The army of Egypt retreated before him. He inflicted a defeat on them and finished them off completely.'[2] To ensure there is no doubt as to what the chronicler means by "completely" he then adds, 'A single (Egyptian) man did not return home'.

He was soon at war again against Syria and he conquered Sidon, Tyre and Damascus. The Chronicle recorded that at Askelon, 'He captured it, seized its king, plundered and sacked it ... and ... turned the city into a ruined heap'.[3] Nebuchadnezzar adopted Sargon's *opus operandi* of enslaving the men, installing the women in his harems, and looting all the treasure. On his next campaign into Syria the Chronicle notes, 'his troops plundered extensively the possessions, animals and gods of numerous Arabs'.[4]

Nebuchadnezzar subjugated the Egyptians and Syrians and other troubling neighbours and was called the 'destroyer of nations' in the Bible

(Jeremiah 4:7) His most infamous conquest was the sack of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple of Solomon in 587 BC.

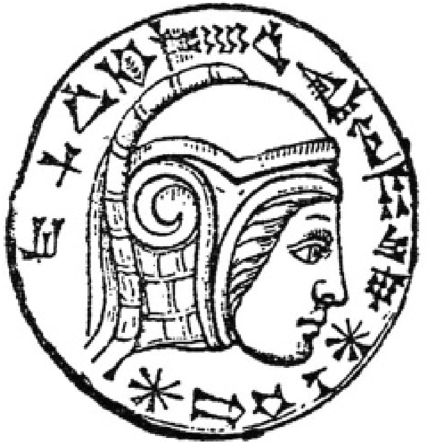
Solomon's Temple or the First Temple was fundamental to the Jews as the first temple of the Biblical Israelites in Jerusalem. From 960 BC it became a centre of worship, pilgrimage and commerce. Its treasures had attracted numerous pillagers and Nebuchadnezzar was the seventh king to sack the Temple. He ransacked it on his first conquest of Jerusalem in 597 BC, when he deposed King Jehoiakim, but it was in 587 BC that he emptied the Temple before destroying it and the city. The Bible (1 Kings 6:16 and 6:20-21, 30) and the Tanakh give detailed descriptions of the interior at the time of Nebuchadnezzar. The doors of the priest's court and great court were overlaid with gold and the floor inlaid with Lebanese cedar with carvings of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers in cedar but encased in gold. A golden altar burned incense, there was a gold table for showbread and five golden candlesticks remaining from Solomon's original ten. The door hinges were gold, as were all the tongs, snuffers and fire pans. A huge brazen sea or bathing pool for the priest's purification by immersion rested on portable bronze supports.

Nebuchadnezzar cut up all the gold vessels and ornaments before removing them (2 Kings 24:13). He took all the bronze and cedar. The Bible says (Jeremiah 52:17 King James version), 'Also all the pillars of brass that were in the house of the lord, and the brazen sea that was in the house of the Lord, the Chaldeans (Babylonians) brake, and carried all the brass to Babylon'. Nebuchadnezzar also deported many of the Jews to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar devoted the rest of his life to adorning and improving his capital at Babylon. His building projects required quantities of gold and manpower, provided by the slaves. He built canals, aqueducts, temples and reservoirs. He completed the royal palace begun by his father using bronze, cedar wood, precious stones, gold and silver. The 47-foot high, blue-bricked Ishtar Gate with inlaid animals both real and imagined, excavated by the Germans in 1899 and now in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, was one of the eight gates to the new city built by Nebuchadnezzar. The dedicatory inscription on the gate in Nebuchadnezzar's own words says:

> Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, the faithful prince appointed by the will of Marduk, the highest of princely princes, beloved of Nabu, of prudent counsel, who has learned to embrace wisdom, who fathomed their divine being and reveres their majesty, the untiring governor, who always takes to heart the care of the cult of Esagila and Ezida and is

> constantly concerned with the well-being of Babylon and Borsippa, the wise, the humble, the caretaker of Esagila and Ezida, the firstborn son of Nabopolassar, the King of Babylon.
>
> Both gate entrances of Imgur-Ellil and Nemetti-Ellil following the filling of the street from Babylon had become increasingly lower. Therefore, I pulled down these gates and laid their foundations at the water table with asphalt and bricks and had them made of bricks with blue stone on which wonderful bulls and dragons were depicted. I covered their roofs by laying majestic cedars length-wise over them. I hung doors of cedar adorned with bronze at all the gate openings. I placed wild bulls and ferocious dragons in the gateways and thus adorned them with luxurious splendour so that people might gaze on them in wonder. I let the temple of Esiskursiskur (the highest festival house of Markduk, the Lord of the Gods a place of joy and celebration for the major and minor gods) be built firm like a mountain in the precinct of Babylon of asphalt and fired bricks.



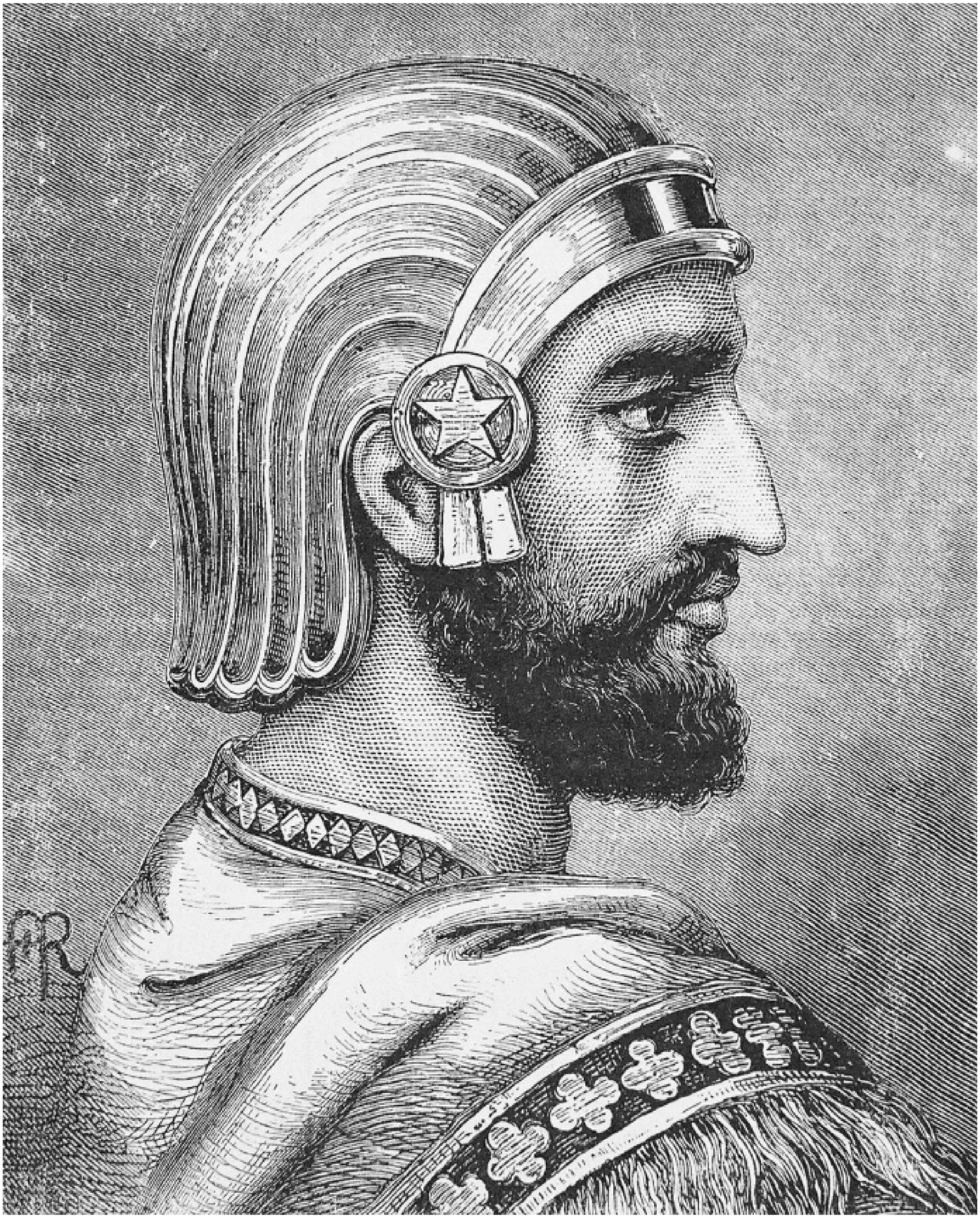
Nebuchadnezzar II King of Babylon (605-562).

Nebuchadnezzar built the first bridge across the Euphrates and erected the Temple of Marduk using a multi-national captured workforce, some of whom are referred to on the dedicatory inscription on the Temple. He also built the hanging garden, which became one of the seven wonders of the ancient world as a present for his homesick wife Amytis, with plants and trees to remind her of her homeland Media in Persia. Roman historian Diodorus described it:

> The Garden was 100 ft [30 m] long by 100 ft wide and built up in tiers so that it resembled a theatre. Vaults had been constructed under the ascending terraces which carried the entire weight of the planted garden; the uppermost vault, which was 75 ft high, was the highest part

> of the garden, which, at this point, was on the same level as the city walls.
>
> The roofs of the vaults which supported the garden were constructed of stone beams some 16 ft long, and over these were laid first a layer of reeds set in thick tar, then two courses of baked brick bonded by cement, and finally a covering of lead to prevent the moisture in the soil penetrating the roof. On top of this roof enough topsoil was heaped to allow the biggest trees to take root. The earth was levelled off and thickly planted with every kind of tree. And since the galleries projected one beyond the other, where they were sunlit, they contained conduits for the water which was raised by pumps in great abundance from the river, though no one outside could see it being done.[5]

Wary of the prophecy of the eighth-century BC Judean prophet Isaiah, Nebuchadnezzar turned Babylon into an impregnable fortress with a defensive perimeter of three separate walls. The city was laid out on either side of a tributary of the Euphrates, which divides into several rivers at that point around 50 miles south of Baghdad. With a population of over 200,000 it was the largest city in the world. Nebuchadnezzar died in Babylon in 562 BC, more proud of his city than of any of his military accomplishments.



Cyrus the Great, King of Persia (559-530 BC).

In Isaiah 13:19; 14:22, 23, Isaiah prophesied that the city of Babylon would be destroyed by king Cyrus, who would dry up the Euphrates and march into the city without a fight. Some 200 years later in 539 BC, Cyrus, King of Persia, whose empire stretched from India to Turkey, arrived at the gates of Babylon. The Euphrates ran beneath its massive walls but the entrances were protected by metal gates through which the water could flow. Cyrus used his army to divert enough of the current to allow his soldiers to crawl under the metal gates and enter the city. They chose a night when the Babylonians were feasting and distracted. His men then opened the gates and the remaining army walked in. The Cyrus cylinder, a contemporary clay tablet in Akkadian cuneiform script, now in the British Museum, details that Cyrus then made Babylon his capital and proclaimed himself, 'King of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad, King of the four quarters of the world'.

Nebuchadnezzar is still revered in Iraq and Saddam Hussein named one of his Republican Guard divisions after him, but, unfortunately for Hussein, the Nebuchadnezzar division inherited none of the famous warrior qualities of the Babylonian king and slunk away on the arrival of the American army in the first Gulf War of 1990.

In 1985 Hussein partly rebuilt the old ruins of Babylon, inscribing many bricks in imitation of Nebuchadnezzar, 'This was built by Saddam Hussein, son of Nebuchadnezzar, to glorify Iraq.' These bricks are now collectors' items. Since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the US military have occupied the site and built a huge helipad over the ruins, flattening parts of the old city with bulldozers, an act for which Colonel John Coleman, former chief of staff for the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, offered a public apology in April 2006.

Cyrus the Great (*c.* 600-530 BC) founded the Persian Empire under the Archaemenid dynasty that lasted until it was destroyed by Alexander the Great. During his 29-year reign, Cyrus fought and conquered kings and states including Croesus (595 BC-*c.* 547) King of Lydia, the Median Empire and the Babylonian Empire. He created an immensely rich empire, as can be seen by the amount of gold that greeted Alexander in the treasuries of Sardis, Susa, Persepolis and elsewhere. Although he removed the gold and silver of his enemies, his legacy today is more that of a statesman than a soldier because he allegedly pursued a policy of generosity to the vanquished and let them keep their own religion. After his conquest of Babylon, he allowed all the Jewish descendants of the slaves taken from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar to return to Jerusalem.

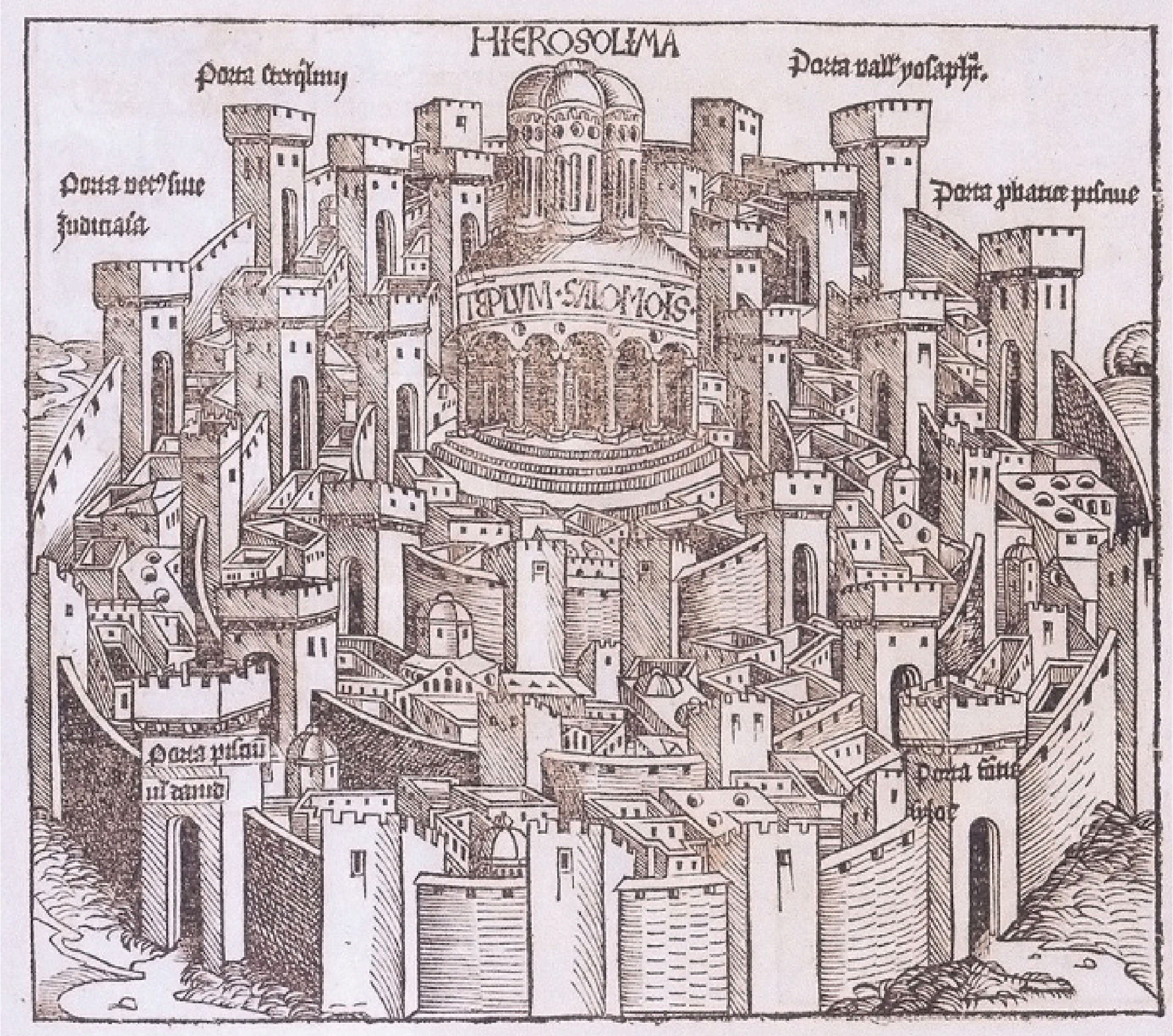
Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) (Alexander III of Macedon).

The Hebrew Bible acknowledges Cyrus's humane treatment of the Jewish captives, and the return of some sacred items (5400 gold and silver vessels) to Jerusalem, which Xenophon referred to as *philanthropeia*, and was the first act of restitution in history. Writing in the 360s BC, Xenophon, who travelled with the Persian army of Cyrus the Younger, has Cyrus the Great exhorting his troops to bravery before battle, telling them that they will lose land, family and their property if beaten, or win everything belonging to the enemy if successful. This pre-battle pep talk was used for the next 2000 years until the time of Napoleon. He then quotes Cyrus, ‘For who does not know that victors save their own possessions and take in addition what belongs to the defeated?’[6] The popular Roman expression, ‘To the victor the spoils (*spolia*)’, is first attributed by Xenophon to Cyrus, but Livy accredits it to Brennus. Ancient tradition also allowed for a general to show compassion or mercy out of humanity (*philanthropeia*).

Persian philosophy, literature and religion dominated the region for the next millennia and the Archaemenid dynasty lasted more than two centuries. Cyrus is consistently on the list of the 100 most influential leaders in history and is often quoted and referred to by modern Iranians. However, since most of the information that has come down to us is from his own scribes, such as on the already-mentioned Cyrus cylinder, there is a danger that his reign is seen too optimistically by many. In the early 19th century Thomas Jefferson recommended Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* (Life of Cyrus) as mandatory reading for statesmen, along with Machiavelli’s *The Prince*.

In the early Greek period respectful behaviour was required inside sacred property and, since this was where most of the statues and artworks were housed, they were often left alone after a victory in fear of the gods’ retribution. Vanquished populations, however, were enslaved and either used or sold off. Monies raised from the ransom or sale of captives or slaves were often used to commission a new statue or temple. Spare funds would be deposited in the city’s central treasury to fund civic expansion and further military expeditions.

One of the first of the ancient Greeks to feature in major looting was the tyrant Dionysios of Syracuse (*c.* 430-367 BC) who drove the Carthaginians out of Sicily. When Marcus Tullius Cicero was prosecuting the corrupt official Gaius Verres in the first century BC, he made continual reference to Dionysios’s looting in comparison with Verres. Cicero describes how Dionysios took the gold mantle from the sanctuary of Zeus Olympios statuettes, gold cups, and crowns from the statues of gods, a magnificent cloak from the sanctuary of Hera at Croton and the contents of the Temple of Leukothea at Pyrgi. Looting became an accepted practice for the Greeks.



The Temple of Solomon, Jerusalem. 15th century woodcut by Hartmann Schedel, 1493.

Xenophon records that the Phocians plundered the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi in 364 BC, which produced a huge quantity of precious metals. This temple had long been considered inviolate and was a rich house of treasure, with donations from Croesus, the rich king of Lydia, and countless others. The Phocians destroyed the temple, even digging up the floor looking for more gold. They found a large gold tripod dedicated to Apollo by the Greeks to commemorate a victory over the Persians at Plataea. It was supported by a bronze column of three intertwined snakes inscribed with the names of the participating Greek communities The Phocians left the column and it was later removed by Constantine I in the fourth century ad to decorate the Hippodrome in his new capital, Constantinople. The column remains in Istanbul today. The Phocian king, Phayllus, melted down 117 ingots of gold and 360 golden goblets and a gold statue 3 cubits (4½ ft) high and a large gold lion.

The brief ascendancy of the Phocians was crushed by the Macedonian king and father of Alexander the Great, Philip II, who executed most of the leadership, destroyed the Phocian towns and even sold the women into slavery for the offence of having worn the looted gold jewellery which had by legend formerly belonged to Helen and Eriphyle.

When Philip was assassinated, he was succeeded by his son, Alexander the Great (356-323 BC), who expected and encouraged his soldiers to live off the land. Philip II had financed his expansion of the Macedonian Empire by seizing the Athenian gold mines at Pangaion. But, by the time Alexander came to the throne, the Macedonian Empire was desperately short of money and Alexander's eyes settled upon the vast and rich Persian Empire to the east. Setting out, newly crowned, from Macedonia in 334 BC, Alexander conquered Mesopotamia, Bactria, Egypt, Gaza, Judea, Phoenicia, Syria, Anatolia and reached as far as northern India.

He was convinced of the superiority of Greek culture and showed little interest in looting the art of the countries he conquered. Alexander was interested in loot he could sell to finance his expensive campaigns, and contemporary historians estimate that the amount of gold and silver, largely unminted, that he removed from the lands he conquered exceeded 180,000 talents (over 4500 tons.) Most of this huge haul came from the Persian Empire which stretched 2500 miles from Egypt to the River Indus.

Persepolis today. Founded by Darius I in 518 BC, Persepolis was the capital of the Achaemenid Empire.

The Persian King, Darius, liked to travel with his treasure and expected his court to do likewise. When he fled from the battlefield of Damascus in 333 BC, Alexander's troops were amazed to find treasure scattered all over the battlefield, including silver earmarked for paying the Persian army, vestments of the royal court, gold place settings, decorated tents, golden horse bits and complete chariots so laden down with gold and silver ingots, they had become stuck in the mud during the panic.

It was at the royal treasuries of Sardis and Susa that Alexander discovered the wealth of the Persian Empire. At Susa Alexander found 40,000-50,000 talents of gold (around 1250 tons) and 9000 talents (225 tons) of the gold coins known as *darics*. The metal that remained unminted was melted down into coin to pay his own army.

Alexander emptied the lands he conquered of all the coin and gold. At Persepolis, the capital of the Persian Empire built at Darius II's command, the Roman historian Diodorus Siculus related:

> The Macedonians poured into the city, slaughtering all the men and ransacking the houses. They found silver in abundance, and gold

> for the taking; a great store of rich vestments, some embroidered in purple, some in cloth of gold, fell into the victor's hands. They pillaged all day long without slaking their insatiable greed. As for the women, all laden with jewellery, they dragged them off by force, treating the throng of female prisoners as slaves.[7]

Alexander took the vast royal treasury of 120,000 talents (3,000 tons) of gold and transferred the bulk of it back to Susa for safekeeping. According to Plutarch, 10,000 mules and 5000 camels struggled to carry the treasure.

The Greek Doric Temple at Segesta, Sicily, built before 430BC.

Alexander adopted many of the customs he encountered, incorporating elements of Persian dress and rituals at court, including the practice of Proskyneis, a symbolic kissing of the hand of a ruler. He married into the families of the kings he conquered with his two marriages to Roxana, daughter of Oxyartes and Stateira, daughter of Darius III of Persia. He also encouraged his men to marry the Persian girls.

Alexander was interested in Greek art and architecture and his written will instructed that temples be built at Delos, Dodona, Delphi, Amphipolis, Dium and Ilium. However, Persian and Indian art and architecture did not interest him. Although all accounts of Alexander’s campaigns have to be treated with caution because, as Strabo observes, ‘All who wrote about Alexander preferred the marvellous to the true’[8], it is recorded that, after looting the treasury of Persepolis, Alexander spent some time staring at the crumbled statue of Xerxes before deciding to leave it in the ground.

Alexander preferred to fight rather than negotiate and there is no account of his ever considering sparing art or architecture. He destroyed Thebes, Persepolis, Tyre and Gaza. His campaigns had long-term cultural effects and led to a flourishing of Hellenistic culture throughout Central Asia and the adoption of the Greek language as the lingua franca. Greek culture spread even beyond his campaigns. There is a perfect copy of a small Greek temple cut into the Buddhist caves at Ajanta Elora in central India near Aurangabad, some 1000 miles beyond where his armies reached.

The overriding impression of Alexander is of his confidence; in himself, his abilities and his culture. Arrian provides the following flowery description, ‘Physically he was very beautiful and almost tireless. His intelligence was penetrating, his courage boundless, none loved glory and danger more; none was so attentive to his duties towards the gods. He was the complete master of bodily pleasures, and proved insatiable only for the pleasures of the mind, for the glory they bore him’.[9] He was also a hard-drinking, bisexual, ruthless soldier who could kill a friend in a rage and destroy some of the most beautiful palaces of Persepolis by setting fire to them after a heavy drinking session.

Alexander wanted to conquer his enemies, take their wealth and expand and civilise the Greek empire. The most famous version of the Greek myth of Jason and the Argonauts was written by Apollonius of Rhodes, head of the library in Alexandria, in the third century BC just after Alexander’s conquests. The story originates in around 1300 BC, a generation before the Trojan War, but only became well known in Homer’s time in 800 BC. Jason embarks on a classic hero’s quest against all odds to recover something precious, and the story has served storytellers right up until the *Mission Impossible* series of today.

Jason sets off with his Argonauts, named after their ship the *Argo*, to recover the magical ram’s fleece, which he has to seize in order to recover his father’s kingdom. A sheep’s skin in those times was used to pan for gold. Jason overcomes numerous obstacles, overpowers the guards and successfully recovers the fleece - perhaps the earliest recorded example of the aggressive acquisition of cultural property.

Art theft first became institutionalised under the Romans. In the Greek period art had often been a by-product of war but now the demand for art sometimes became a reason for war. The Romans were great engineers but they lacked the Greek aesthetic and they never understood the Greek sense of proportion. The Greeks had discovered the Golden Ratio by observing that the branches along the stems of plants, the veins on leaves and animal skeletons all adhered to a consistent proportion and decided it must be a universal law. Although first attributed to Pythagoras, it was Euclid around 300 BC in his textbook *Elements* who codified it as the Euclid Algorithm as, ‘a straight line is said to have been cut in extreme and mean ratio when, as the whole line is to the greater segment, so is the greater to the less’.[10]

The Greeks applied this discovery to architecture, hence the harmonious proportions of the Parthenon on the Acropolis and at the temples at Segesta, Aegina and Paestum. They used geometric proportions for the human form and their best sculptors such as Praxiteles, Myron and Scopas made a body of sculpture which in its classical perfection has never been bettered. They developed the ‘tipped scales’ effect, where in human sculpture they raised one shoulder and dropped the other, raised one hip and dropped the other, thus allowing the weight to fall down one side of the body and having muscles flex on one side.

The Romans initially tried to copy Greek sculpture, but without much success. Faultless in their engineering of aquaducts and roads, they struggled to make a beautiful building or sculpture. In their temples they misunderstood the Greek proportions. A comparison of the Roman Maison Carrée at Nimes, built by Marcus Agrippa in around 15 BC, with the temple at Segesta in Sicily, south of Palermo from around 450 BC reveals that although the Maison Carrée is frequently referred to as a perfect example of Vitruvian architecture, aesthetically it is too tall and narrow, whereas Segesta feels more solid and balanced.

The Romans rapidly developed a thirst for Greek art, stole it on a huge scale and the art market began. They paraded the art, along with the vanquished, through the streets of Rome and then displayed these triumphal objects in the Roman Forum - the world’s first outdoor museum. In addition to the demand for Greek sculpture, a market for faithful Roman copies developed and many of these Roman reproductions remain today, but lack the life of the originals which were made with a close observation to nature.

Pyrrhus, (319-272 BC). King of Hellenistic Epirus whose costly military successes against Macedonia and Rome gave rise to the phrase "Pyrrhic victory."

The triumphal procession, or Triumph, was the high point in a general's career. It followed a strict route: through the ceremonial gate in the Campus Martius, round the western side of the Capitoline, through the Circus Maximus and ending up at the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. The Senate was followed by the *triumphator* in a four-horse chariot, the troops and as many cartloads of booty as possible. Ideally, the defeated king or queen and prisoners brought up the rear. The Senate imposed strict terms for a Triumph; the general had to have killed at least 5,000 people in a declared war against a foreign enemy, the army had to return with the victor to Rome and the victor had to have held the title of official *imperium*. When these conditions were not met, a lesser service was allowed called an *ovatio*.

Roman historians often referred to the looting of Greek artefacts, as well as Etruscan and Egyptian works. The Romans established a template for stealing art at the site of their first major conquest. The Etruscan city of Veii, described by Livy as 'the richest and most powerful city of the Etruscan nation',[11] lay around ten miles from Rome. Since the fifth century, Rome and Veii had fought over land and the leadership of local smaller cities. In 396 BC Rome destroyed Veii and the city ceased to be an autonomous state. Veii was incorporated as part of the Roman state and its people became Roman citizens, were expelled or enslaved. All its civic institutions were closed and the art taken to Rome. Livy describes the 10-year Roman siege of Veii and details the distribution of loot and the allocation of slaves between state and army. This was soon codified under Roman law and a guideline established for future conquests, although it was constantly modified.

One of the Roman Empire's richest hauls from this period came from P. Cornelius Scipio's sack of New Carthage in 209 BC. The rape, pillage and looting was described by the Greek historian Polybius (*c.* 200-118 BC), who raised questions that have been debated ever since: Who owns the booty? Do the gods get a reserved share? Who decides on the division of the spoils? Is it the general on the ground or the guidelines laid down by Rome? According to Livy, it was up to the commander on the ground to decide on the division of the booty. A portion would be for the commander, the manubiae or manubila, for use in the public interest (usually new temples and statues in Rome). It was never for his own treasury and Romans were very clear on this distinction, as Verres later found to his cost when prosecuted by Cicero. A general was expected to deliver to the Senate a full account of each item. He could make distributions to soldiers and colleagues as gifts and should give a proportion to the state treasury. By the Imperial period, however, the booty belonged to the Emperor and less discretion was allowed.

Pompey (106-48 BC). Military and political leader of the late Roman Republic.

In the 300 years after the sack of Veii, huge quantities of precious metals and artworks were transferred to Rome from conquered cities in Spain, Italy, Sicily, Africa, Gaul, Greece and Asia Minor. Roman historians explain that removing the art completed the humiliation of the vanquished, and the spoils could be paraded and shown off back in Rome to enhance the victory and sold to pay for the expense of campaigning.

Pyrrhus was the Greek King of the Molossians, of Epirus and of Macedon, and engaged in the Pyrrhic Wars of 280-275 BC. The term

‘Pyrrhic victory’ refers to some of his victories, which came at enormous cost. After one battle he said, ‘One more such victory will undo me!’ When the Romans finally defeated him at the battle of Beneventum in 275 BC Florus commentated, ‘if you looked at the (Roman) victory procession you would have seen richly adorned statues of gold and charming Tarentine panels’.[12]

Most of the historians of the Roman period spoke well of the Romans, but the philosopher and statesman Metrodorus of Skepsis (the modern-day city of Bayramic in Turkey), constantly derided Rome and commentated that the ‘people of Colsinii were conquered for the sake of two thousand statues’.[13] Here, for the first time, art had become the primary reason for conquest.

In Mithridates, King of Pontus (ruled 120-63 BC), the Romans encountered their most formidable enemy after Hannibal. His army consisted of over 400 ships, 50,000 cavalry, 250,000 infantry and numerous engines and arms. He filled the seas with pirates that harassed Roman shipping and formed alliances with all opposed to the Romans, including the Gauls. Because of Mithridates, the Romans were forced to conquer and extend their empire as far as the Euphrates and the Sea of Azov.

Although Mithridates fought Roman generals for decades, he was finally partially conquered by Lucullus. In his *Life of Lucullus* Plutarch wrote:

> The pomp [of Lucullus’ triumph] proved not so wonderful or so wearisome with the length of the procession and the number of things carried in it, but consisted chiefly in vast quantities of arms and machines of the king’s [*i.e.* Mithridates], with which he adorned the Flaminian circus, a spectacle by no means despicable. In his progress there passed by a few horsemen in heavy armour, ten chariots armed with scythes, sixty friends and officers of the king’s, and a hundred and ten brazen-beaked ships of war, which were conveyed along with a golden image of Mithridates six feet high, a shield set with precious stones, twenty loads of silver vessels, and thirty-two of golden cups, armour, and money, all carried by men. Besides which, eight mules were laden with golden couches, fifty-six with bullion, and a hundred and seven with coined silver, little less than two million seven hundred thousand pieces.[14]

The Arch of Titus, Rome 81AD The internal frieze depicting the spoils of Jerusalem. The triumphal procession with the booty from the Temple at Jerusalem, including the sacred Menorah, the Table of the Shewbread shown at an angle, and the silver trumpets which called the Jews to Rosh Hashanah. The bearers of the booty wear laurel crowns and those carrying the candlestick have pillows on their shoulders. Placards in the background explain the spoils or the victories Titus won. These few figures, standing for hundreds in the actual procession, move towards the carved arch at the right, complete with quadriga at the top.

After Lucullus died, Pompey completed the destruction of Mithridates. The Romans called it ‘The Great Victory’ and Pompey was entitled ‘Magnus’ or ‘the Great’. Pompey consolidated Roman power in Asia Minor, Syria and Palestine, culminating in a triumphal procession in Rome in 61 BC, with the contents of the treasuries of Mithridates. In his account of the Mithridatic Wars the Greek writer, Appian of Alexandria, recorded Pompey’s return to Rome:

> As he approached the city he was met by successive processions, first of youths, farthest from the city; then bands of men of different ages came out as far as they severally could walk; last of all came the Senate, which was lost in wonder at his exploits, for no one had ever before vanquished so powerful an enemy and at the same time brought

so many great nations under subjection and extended the Roman rule to the Euphrates. He was awarded a triumph exceeding in brilliancy any that had gone before. It occupied two successive days; and many nations were represented in the procession from Pontus, Armenia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, all the peoples of Syria, besides Albanians, Heniochi, Achaeans, Scythians, and Eastern Iberians; 700 complete ships were brought into the harbour; in the triumphal procession were two-horse carriages and litters laden with gold or with other ornaments of various kinds, also the couch of Darius [the Great], the son of Hystaspes, the throne and sceptre of Mithridates Eupator himself, and his image, eight cubits high, made of solid gold, and 75,000,000 drachmae of silver coin [Arkenberg: about $193 million in 1998 dollars]. The number of wagons carrying arms was infinite and the number of prows of ships. After these came the multitude of captives and pirates, none of them bound, but all arrayed in their native costume. Before Pompey himself were led the satraps, sons and generals of the kings against whom he had fought, who were present-some having been captured, some given as hostages-to the number of three hundred and twenty-four. Among them were five sons of Mithridates, and two daughters; also Aristobulus, king of the Jews; the tyrants of the Cilicians, and other potentates. There were carried in the procession images of those who were not present, of Tigranes king of Armenia, and of Mithridates, representing them as fighting, as vanquished, and as fleeing. Even the besieging of Mithridates and his silent flight by night was represented. Finally, it was shown how he died, and the daughters who perished with him were pictured also, and there were figures of the sons and daughters who died before him, and images of the barbarian gods decked out in the fashion of their countries... Pompey himself was borne in a chariot studded with gems, wearing, it is said, the cloak of Alexander the Great, if anyone can believe that. This was supposed to have been found among the possessions of Mithridates ... His chariot was followed by the officers who had shared the campaigns with him, some on horseback, and others on foot. When he reached the Capitol, he did not put any prisoners to death, as had been customary at other triumphs, but sent them all home at the public expense, except the kings. Of these Aristobulus alone was shortly put to death and Tigranes son of Tigranes the king of Armenia some time later.[15]

Also included were Mithridates' treasures that Pompey had found in the city of Talauri, recorded by Appian as containing '2000 drinking cups made of onyx welded with gold, and many cups, wine coolers, and drinking horns, bridles for horses, etc. ... All ornamented in like manner with gold and precious stones the quantity of this store was so great that the inventory of it occupied thirty days. These things had been inherited from Darius the Great of Persia and other mighty rulers'.

Pliny and Plutarch record many other episodes of Roman looting on an epic scale. The sack and destruction of Corinth in 146 BC yielded so much loot that it was said the victorious general L. Mummius was able to redecorate Italy. When the Romans sacked Jerusalem in AD 70, they looted everything of value for the military victory parade. The Arch of Titus was constructed by the Emperor Domitian on the Via Sacra to commemorate this victory shortly after the death of his brother Titus. The Arch, built of Pentelic marble and 13.5 metres high has been the prototype for most triumphal arches built since.

On an internal frieze Roman legionnaires are carved marching and laden down with the Jerusalem loot. They struggle under the weight of boxes, banners, musical instruments and a huge menorah. Due to its depiction, many Jews still avoid walking under the Arch, but in 1948 on the foundation of Israel, a large contingent from the Roman Jewish population walked through the Arch in the opposite direction from that of the original Roman triumphal march.

P
CHANGE

Treasure poured into Rome, but the Romans distinguished between the spoils of war, which was acceptable, and private looting, which was not. A famous court case was brought by Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BC) in 70 BC against the former Sicilian governor, Gaius Verres, for extortion. Cicero had served as Quaestor in Sicily in 75 BC and so had seen Verres's looting. Although Cicero had to cut his speeches because festivals closed the courts, he published his speeches (*Verrines*), and these have been used as a reference on the subject of looting and restitution ever since.

Edmund Burke quoted Cicero's *Verrines* in his opening speech on the prosecution of Warren Hastings for extortion in 1794, 'We have all in our early education read the Verronean orations. We read them not merely to instruct us, as they ought to do, in the principles of eloquence, to instruct us in the manners, customs and laws of the ancient Romans... but for which it should be shown what course a great public accuser ought to follow'.[16] Although he couldn't read, Charlemagne had a copy of the Verrines in his court library and the Duke of Wellington used them in his letter asking for full restitution of Napoleonic looted art in 1815.

Cicero was a formidable barrister, orator, philosopher and rhetorician and his speeches so powerful that Verres fled Rome for exile in Massilia (Marseilles) with much of his booty after the first speech. Cicero first describes Verres's plundering whilst serving as a legate in Asia Minor. He points out that Aemilius Paullus, L. Mummius and Scipio Aemilianus, all great victorious Roman generals, brought massive amounts of loot to Rome without furnishing their own homes but Verres stole for himself. Cicero does not criticise looting by the nation but makes a clear distinction for private theft. He produces a detailed list of Verres's thefts in Sicily: an extensive array of statues, gold and silver objects and historical paintings and portraits.

Cicero then contrasts Verres's behaviour with that of Scipio Aemilianus who, after the sack of Carthage, made restitution to the Greeks in Sicily of many items that had been stolen by the Carthaginians. Sicilian cities that made successful claims and had items restored included Akragas, Gela, Tyndaris and Segesta. The next time a restitution on this scale occurred was the repatriation of Napoleonic looted items after the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

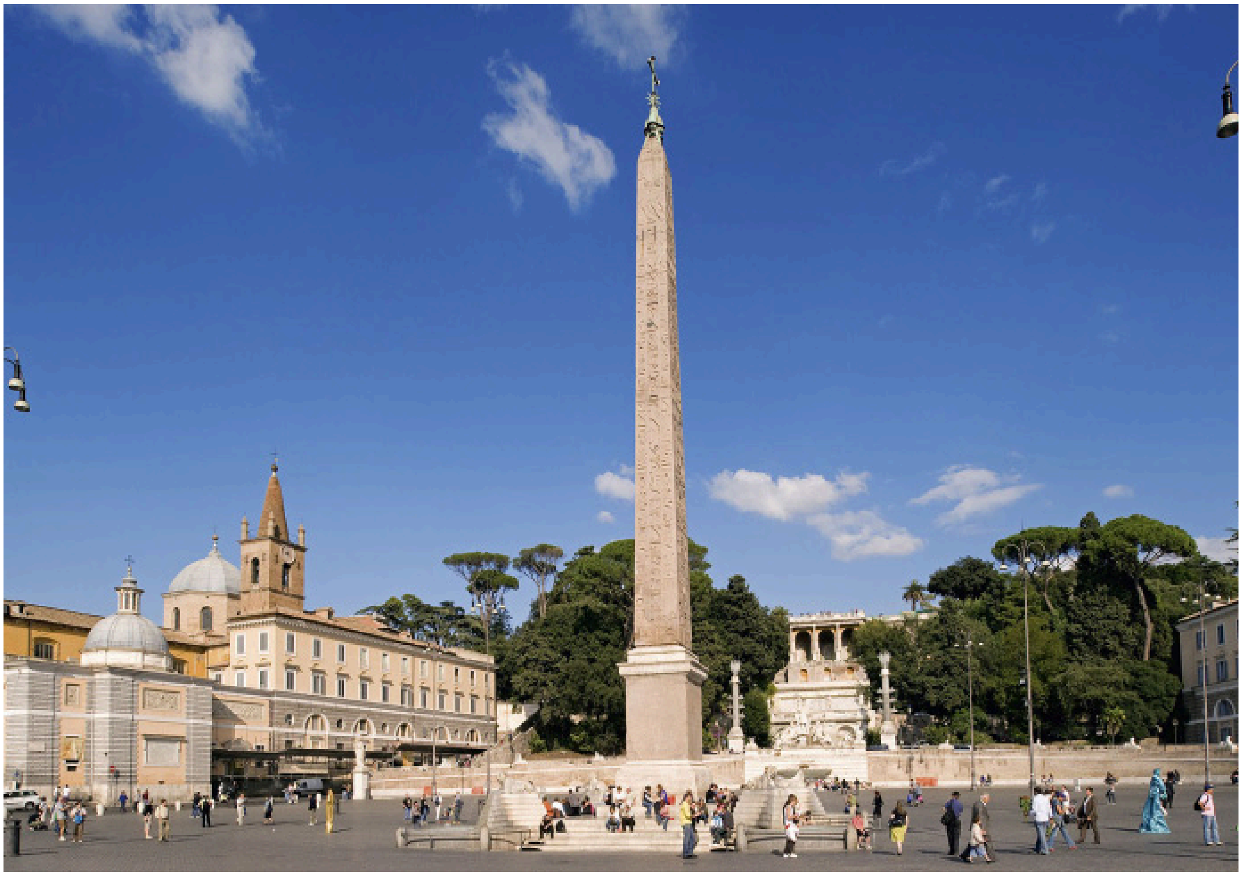
Cicero is incensed that Verres looted items that had been returned to Sicily by Scipio. He points out that Sicily was an ally of Rome's, not an enemy, which made the crime inexcusable. Although the charge against Verres was extortion, Cicero explores his looting as a way of establishing his rapacious character. Verres was convicted on all counts, including: dishonest financial dealings, manipulation of inheritances in his favour, associating with pirates, and the torture, flogging and crucifixion of Roman citizens. Cicero also maintained that Verres had behaved in un-Roman way, showing no respect for tradition, violating shrines and temples and showing ignorance of hospitality and patronage.

Cicero divided property into three categories. It could be sacred, public or private (*res sacrae*, *res publicae* or *res privatea*) and Verres was guilty of stealing all three. Cicero's art terminology is still used today: such parameters as age, attribution, monetary value, historical association, previous ownership and aesthetic quality. He distinguishes between beautiful (*pulcherrimus*), vividly beautiful (*vensutas*) and ancient workmanship of the highest skill (*perfectus*). An image of Sappho wins his appreciation in that it is perfect, elegant and elaborate (*perfectus*, *elegans*, *elaborates*). Pliny the Elder (23-79) used Cicero's categorisation of art in his encyclopaedic treatise on nature and culture and they were the foundation of J.J. Winckelmann's work on art categorisation in the eighteenth century.

Rome became fascinated with Egypt, which Octavian had conquered in 30 BCfollowing the defeat of Marc Antony and the Ptolemaic Queen Cleopatra VII at the battle of Actium. Egypt became the bread basket of the Roman Empire. After the Caesarean conquests, Egyptmania became as fashionable in Rome as it was in London 2000 years later. Apart from Greece, no other country had such an impact on Roman culture and the Egyptian gods rapidly became incorporated into the Roman pantheon.

It was the obelisks that were most sought after by the Roman emperors. Augustus was the first to take them from Egypt and he intended that the huge authentic monuments from Egypt with Latin inscriptions carved alongside the hieroglyphics should provide the people of Rome with a reminder of their triumphs over the peoples of the Mediterranean. Thirteen obelisks remain standing in Rome today of the 48 originally taken, although none of them are in their original positions. In the sixteenth century many were broken up and incorporated into other buildings. Their survival today is due to Pope Sixtus V (1585-90), who put them back together and used them for focal points in his urban redevelopment of the city. He converted many of them into Christian monuments by placing a cross on the top and adding new inscriptions.

Bas relief fragment portraying Cleopatra (3^{rd}-1^{st} century BC Ptolemaic period.).



Piazza del Popolo, Rome.

The obelisk currently in the Piazza del Popolo was cut by the Pharaoh Ramesses II in Heliopolis before being taken to Rome in 30 BC by Augustus, who erected it in the centre of the Circus Maximus. Augustus dedicated it to the sun, as had been its original dedication in Egypt. The obelisk fell over in the wars between the Goths and the Byzantines, but was rediscovered in 1587 covered in debris. In 1589 Sixtus V had it repaired, slightly shortened and added his own emblem of stars and mountains on its top before erecting it in the Piazza del Popolo where it stands at the convergence of Via di Ripetta, Via del Corso and Via del Babuino.

The obelisk in the Piazza di Montecitorio was originally erected by Psammetichus II in the seventh century BC and was brought to Rome by Augustus who placed it in a vast square as a sundial (Horologeum Divi Augusti), where its shadow indicated the hours and the day of the year. The obelisk was split into five pieces in 1748 before being rebuilt and put up in the Piazza di Montecitorio. Some of the original panels were lost and the symbol on top bears the coat of arms of Pope Pius VI. At noon, a sunbeam shines through a specially cut opening in the globe illuminating a series of dates and marks on the floor.

The tallest obelisk, and the last to be removed from Egypt, is that of Thutmoses VI and it stands today in the Piazza S. Giovanni in Laterano. Both Augustus and Constantine pondered how to get this enormous monument back to Rome from Thebes (Luxor). Both were defeated by the logistical problem. Nearly 2000 years later the British were to have similar problems trying to transport Cleopatra's Needle back to England. The British built a special metal ship named the Cleopatra in 1877 and, despite being twice shipwrecked, managed to sail it to Britain and up the Thames before installing it on the Embankment. Its sister obelisk was taken to New York at the same time and stands in Central Park.

Thutmoses' obelisk defeated the Roman emperors until Emperor Constantius II built a special ship. The obelisk stands 105 ft high, has a width diminishing from 9 ft 6 ins to 8 ft 7 ins and weighs in excess of 450 tons. Moving a slightly smaller obelisk in the nineteenth century was nearly beyond the British Victorian engineers and Constantius II's achievement in bringing it to Rome was considerable. He erected it in the Circus Maximus. Sacked and knocked down by the Goths, it remained undisturbed until 1587 (along with Rameses II's obelisk) when it was found in three pieces, rebuilt and moved to Piazza S. Giovanni in 1588 by Sixtus V, who decorated its top with his own emblems. In addition to the three mountains with the star, it also has a lion holding pears - a curious contrast to the well-preserved hieroglyphs.

The Riace bronzes are two of the finest full-size bronzes of nude bearded Greek warriors to survive, their survival almost certainly due to their theft by the Romans. They were cast around 450 BC and are currently in the Museo Nazionale della Magna Grecia in Reggio Calabria in southern Italy. Known today as Warrior 'A' and Warrior 'B', they are larger than life size, either modelled on a seven-foot-tall warrior or slightly idealised. All the anatomy and musculature are correct.

Each Riace Warrior has one foot in front of the other, tipping the pelvis to one side and giving the impression of movement. The eyes are inlaid with bone and glass; the teeth are silver and the lips and nipples are copper. The once-held spears and shields are now lost and Warrior 'B' wore a helmet pushed up on the top of his head.

The bronzes belong to a transitional period between archaic Greek sculpture and the early classical style and are of importance to scholars of Greek sculpture. The effect of *contrapposto* with the weight on the back leg gives the sculptures more life than was achieved by earlier archaic models. The musculature is not yet incised but well enough defined to be visible and realistic. Originally it was believed they were based on the same man with modifications to the wax before casting, but modern plastic surgeons have shown that the completely different muscular structure of the abdominal muscles indicates that two different models were used.

Argos, Delphi and Olympia have all been suggested as original locations and no further Riace bronzes have ever been found. Attributions have tended to include all the leading Greek sculptors of the period and they are clearly not from a mere colonial workshop.

It is believed they were on their way back to Rome when the ship was hit by a storm off the coast of Riace near Reggio Calabria. The ship sank in six metres of water and the bronzes lay undisturbed for 2000 years until a Roman chemist called Stefano Mariottini found them on a scuba diving vacation at Monasterace on 16th August 1972. They were in perfect condition except for a light coating of corrosion from the salt water. They were removed to the local Museo Nazionale and slowly cleaned over several years. In 1981 their exhibition in Florence and Rome was the cultural event of the year and they are now displayed on small blocks of Travertine marble in the museum as the finest surviving classical sculptures of their type.

One of the two 5th century BC over-life-size Greek bronzes recovered from the sea off the coast of Riace, near Reggio Calabria, Italy.

Two of the Julio-Claudian emperors, Caligula (r. AD 37-41) and Nero (r. AD 54-68) are well recorded by the ancient writers (including Dio, Josephus, Pliny and Suetonius) for their looting along the Verrine model. Both developed a passion for Greek art and raided public displays of art in Rome for their own palaces and gardens as well as sending out parties all over mainland Greece to remove what they coveted.

Caligula tried to erect a huge statue of himself in the Temple at Jerusalem. Suetonius describes how Caligula would smash statues when he was in a rage and how he ordered the heads of the gods on statuary to be removed and replaced with his own head. Caligula removed the famous Eros by Praxiteles at Thespiae, but his successor Claudius returned this and other looted statues from Athens. Nero also removed the Eros from Thespiae along with another 500 bronze statues from the sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, a sanctuary considered inviolate. Nero set up a 106-foot-high statue of himself and had a painting of himself that was 120 ft high. His looted art on public display caused widespread dissent amongst the Roman people.

In the later Roman period art collecting became acceptable if the artworks had been properly acquired, and contemporary historians start discussing important private art collections such as that of the connoisseur Novius Vindex, who was said to have had works by Apelles, Praxiteles, Polykleitos, Myron and Pheidias.

When Constantinople became the new capital of the Eastern Roman Empire under Emperor Constantine in AD 324 it led to the split of the empire. Initially Constantine named the city Nova Roma, but the city rapidly became known as the City of Constantine or Constantinople. Constantine enlarged the old city and renovated the Hippodrome. He had no qualms about raiding the cities of ancient Greece and even Rome to decorate his new city. More than 100 monuments were erected in time for the city’s dedication ceremony in 330. Constantine raided over 22 cities to provide statues and artefacts, preferring Late Classical, Hellenistic and Roman period sculpture and materials including marble, bronze and porphyry.

Constantinople’s Hippodrome was a horse and chariot racing track. Chariot racing was a popular pastime in the Hellenistic and Roman eras. The original Hippodrome pre-dates Constantine and was built during the Byzantine era when the city was known as Byzantium. It was further enlarged by the Emperor Septimus Severus in 203. Constantine’s

Hippodrome is estimated to have been 450 metres long, 130 metres wide and could hold 100,000 spectators. Today it is a square named Sultan Ahmet square in Istanbul with only a few fragments of the original structure remaining.

Constantine decorated the Hippodrome with art and sculptures befitting the largest stadium in the world and his successors such as Theodosius the Great continued this practice. Constantine removed artworks from all over the empire for decoration, sometimes legally, but mainly by looting. The legality of removing artworks, particularly from conquered lands, would not have occurred to Constantine. If he desired something that was within his power, he sent his troops to fetch it.

The Hippodrome's track was lined with bronze statues of famous horses and chariot drivers, none of which survive. The stadium was filled with statues of gods, emperors and heroes, including *Romulus and Remus Suckling from the Wolf*, *Herakles* by Lysippus and the *Serpent Column of the Platean Tripod*.

The colossal bronze Lysippean *'Herakles'* had been synonymous with Tarantum as part of the city's civic history and pride since it was made. Its removal to Rome by Fabius Maximus, the general in charge, was designed to complete Tarantum's humiliation and degradation. Constantine removed this powerful symbol to the Hippodrome.

The Tripod of Platea, now known more simply as the *Serpent Column*, which still stands in the square, was removed from the Temple of Apollo at Delphi and set in the middle of the Hippodrome. The top of the column was adorned with a golden bowl supported by three serpent heads. This was stolen by Venetian soldiers during the Fourth Crusade along with the four bronze *Horses of St Mark's*.

The obelisks of Egypt held the same fascination for the emperors of Constantinople as they had for earlier emperors, although most of them had been removed to Rome long before. Two remain at the site of the Hippodrome today. The so-called *'Walled Obelisk'* was constructed in situ by the Emperor Porphyrogenitus in the tenth century and covered in gold plaques (which were stolen from Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade). The second obelisk is carved from a single piece of pink granite and was originally erected at the Temple of Karnak in Luxor during the reign of Tutmoses III in 1490 BC. It was taken to the Hippodrome by Theodosius the Great in 390 who cut it into three pieces to move it. Only the top piece survives today above a plaque showing Emperor Theodosius as he offers a laurel wreath to the victor of the *Kathisma* (Imperial Box) at the Hippodrome.

The plundered statues gave the new city ties to Rome’s imperial past and long history of successful conquest. The status of the old cities from where the art came was transferred to the new city. Many of the monuments had been commissioned to celebrate victories in the past and Constantine was continuing the tradition established by previous Roman emperors and establishing a precedent for Napoleon and Hitler and monarchs such as Gustavus Adolphus II of Sweden and Catherine the Great of Russia.

An early critic of Constantine’s looting was St Jerome (*c.* 347-420) who observed, ‘Constantinople was dedicated by stripping nude nearly every city’.[17] Jerome, a saint best known for translating the Bible into Latin known as the Vulgate, had read Cicero’s *Verrines* and was consistently outspoken on the issue of looting, particularly when the objects were venerated as having religious significance, whether Christian or not.

The *Triumphal Quadriga* or *Horses of St Mark’s* are a set of four Greek horses depicted in a line walking forward with one foot raised. Stylistically, it is clear they are Greek and not Roman because of the quality of the modelling and the casting. Unusually, the horses are practically pure copper with lead and tin only comprising 2% of the total. Although copper has a higher melting point than bronze, and is therefore more difficult to work with, the metal can be gilded. Although ungilded today, they were certainly gilded at their time in the Hippodrome as contemporary histories relate. An early eighth-century chronicle of the monuments of Constantinople, the *Parastaseis Syntomei Chronikai* refers to, ‘four horses shining with gold’, and again, ‘four gilt horses that stand above the Hippodrome’.[18]

They were clearly intended to be viewed from below with their long legs and short backs, they date from late classical antiquity and have been attributed to the Greek sculptor Lysippus, the only sculptor Alexander the Great would allow to do his portrait. Pliny attributes over 1500 works to him. There was a lively market in ancient Rome for Lysippus’s sculptures, both real and fake. The emperors skimmed the market for his works and it is believed that Nero managed to secure the four horses for Rome around AD 50, where they were displayed either in the Domus Aurea or on top of Trajan’s Arch.

The horses disappeared for 250 years before Constantine discovered them and installed them on the Triumphal gate leading into the Hippodrome.

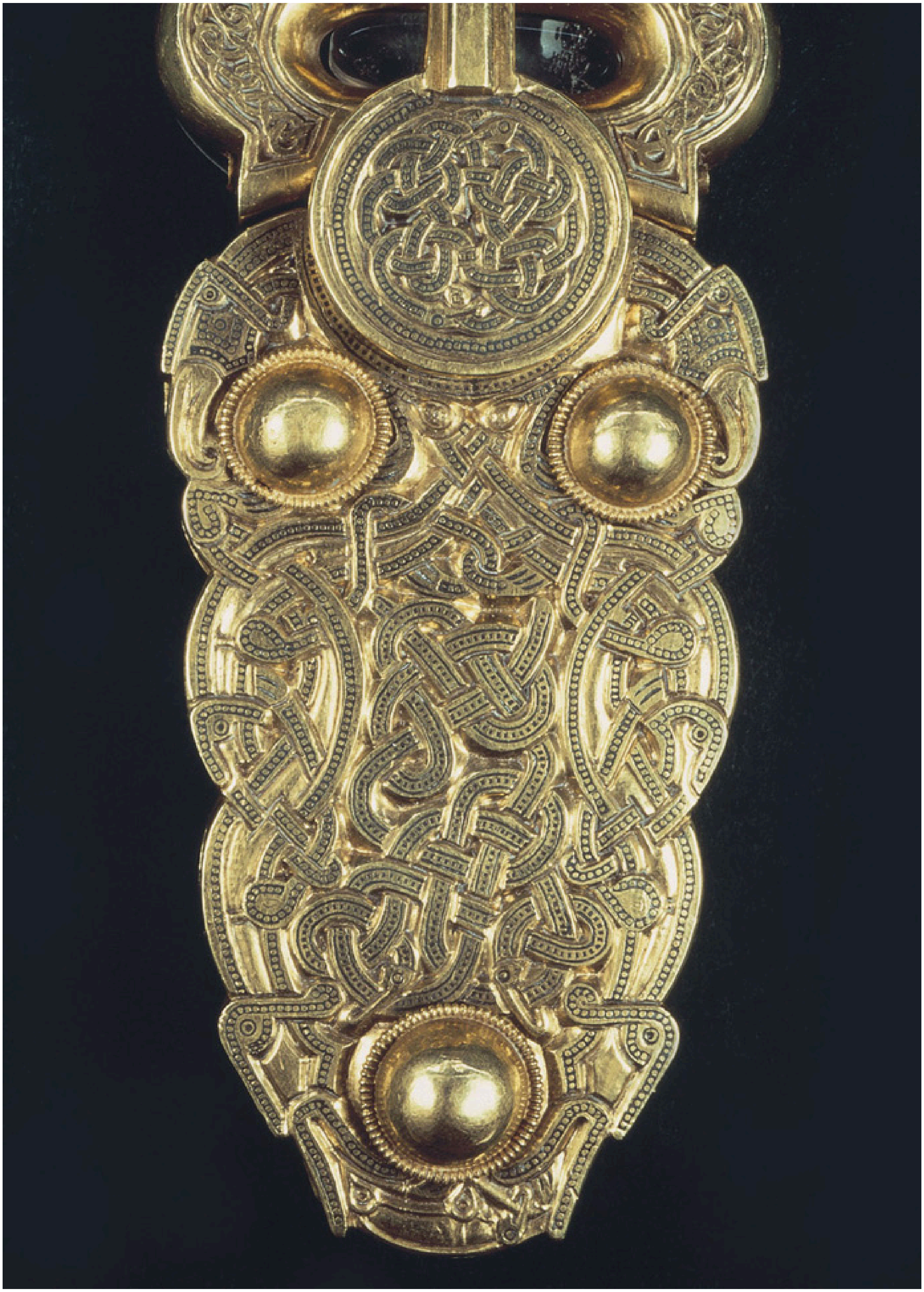
Niketas Choniates in *Annals (CXIX)* relates that, ‘Now, in the Hippodrome there was a tower which stood opposite the spectators; beneath it were the starting posts which opened into the racecourse through parallel arches and above which were fixed four gilt-bronze horses, their necks somewhat curved as if they eyed each other as they raced round the last lap’.[19]

The horses survived around 900 years at the Hippodrome until stolen by Doge Enrico Dandolo in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade. They were installed on the terrace of the facade of St Mark’s Basilica in Venice by 1254 and remained there until stolen in 1797 by Napoleon, who, after parading them through the streets of Paris, installed them on the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel. The British sent them back to Venice after Napoleon’s fall in 1815. Due to pollution the original horses were placed inside the Basilica in the 1980s and replicas were placed outside, where they remain today.

Istanbul occasionally makes half-hearted efforts at sounding out their return but it is open to discussion whether these horses ‘belong’ in their original Greek location (unknown but given as the island of Chios by some Roman historians), Rome, Venice or Paris. The horses have spent roughly the same amount of time in Venice and Istanbul, around 900 years, but neither location can claim to be the true or original owner.

With the decline of the Roman Empire and the overthrow of the last Roman Emperor Romulus Augustus by the barbarian Odoacer in 476, Europe slid into the ‘Dark Ages’ for 1000 years. This term was coined by Petrarch in the 1330s: ‘Amidst the errors there shone forth men of genius, no less keen were their eyes, although they were surrounded by darkness and dense gloom’.[20] Petrarch saw the age of Classical Antiquity as ‘light’ because of its cultural achievements. It had been followed by the period of ‘darkness’ in which he lived, and this would in turn be superseded by a revival of the Roman Empire, a premonition of the Renaissance which followed shortly afterwards.

Modern scholars also point out the considerable advances made during the ‘Dark Ages’: the formation of the Romanesque period of architecture, the codification of civil law (*corpus juris civilis*) under the Eastern Roman Emperor Justinian (483-565), the Carolingian Renaissance in the arts, architecture and scriptural studies in the 8th century, the advances of Islamic culture such as the first book on algebra by Al-Khwarizmi (790-840), the University of Bologna offering the first degree in 1088 and the advances made in Anglo-Saxon and early Germanic law alongside a functioning feudal system.



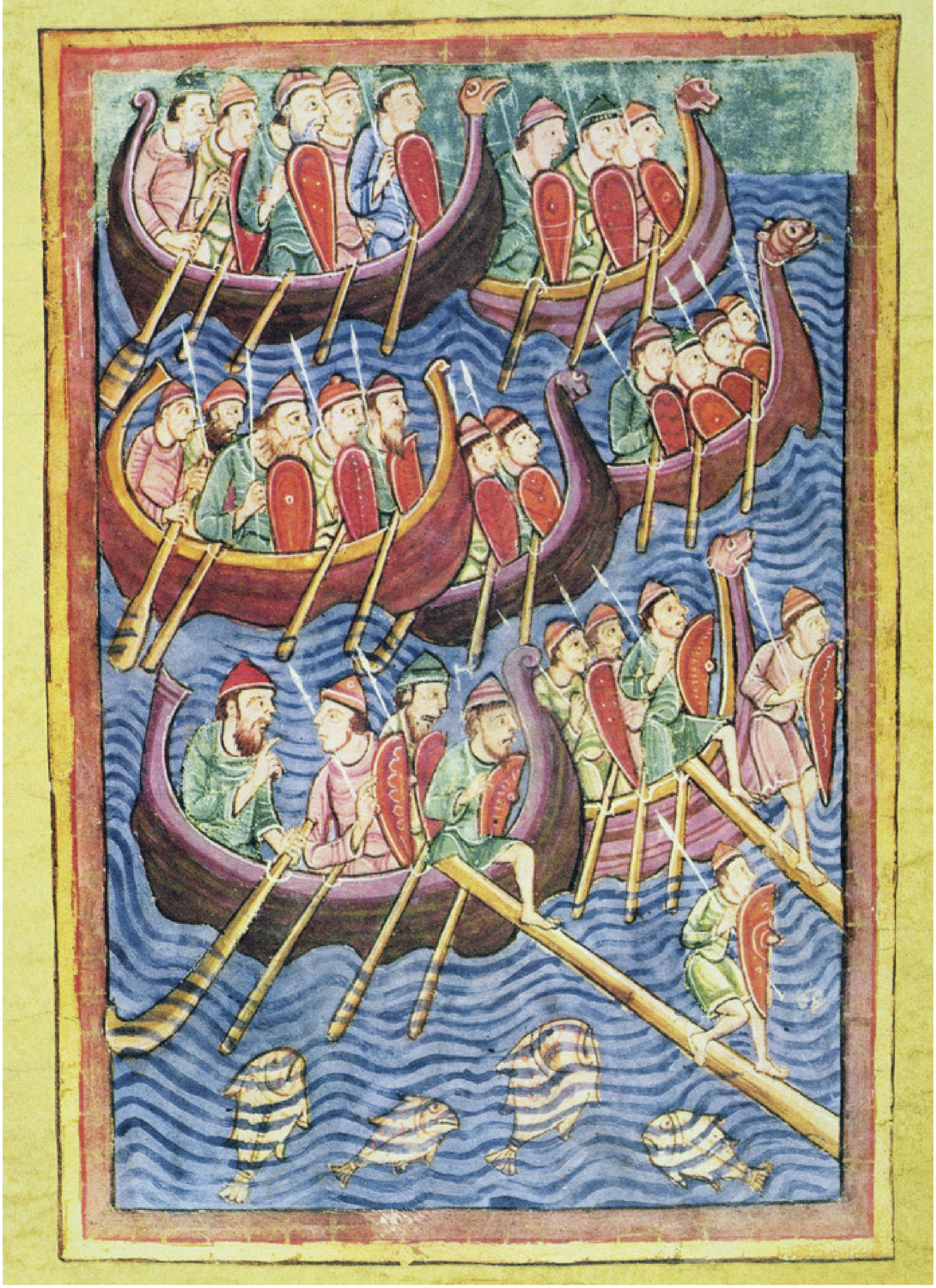
Sutton Hoo Treasure. Gold buckle with reliefs of snakes and other animals. Early 7th century AD.

However, a vacuum was left by the collapse of the Roman Empire. While the Aztecs, Islamic world and the Chinese flourished, Europe disintegrated. Trade collapsed and small communities became insular and self-sufficient. Literacy became rare and few permanent buildings were constructed. Bartering sometimes replaced the exchange of coin. Raiding parties became purely practical, as survival became paramount, and took what they needed such as women, food and coin.

Various parties used the chaos to their advantage. The Vikings started invading the coastal regions of Britain, the Moors invaded Southern Spain and Portugal, and Charlemagne consolidated his Empire in North Western Europe. Under consolidation during the time of Pope Innocent III (1160-1216) the Catholic Church gradually came to dominate religious thinking in Western Europe providing a belief system and the seductive possibility of an after-life to people at a time when life was brutal and short.

The Viking age is generally used to describe the years 650-1066 AD in European history. Warlike tribes from Scandinavia started exploring Europe by boat, initially for trade, as early as the fifth century. With their exceptional clinker-built longboats they bartered iron, amber, walrus ivory and leather in exchange for glass, silk, steel and silver. From the Baltic they reached Baghdad, Rome, Africa and northern India.

They developed the practice of boat burials for warriors and their families with their artworks but it’s difficult to tell if the buried art is their own or looted. The practice of boat burials spread to the Anglo-Saxons. The most important boat burial in England is the hoard discovered at Sutton Hoo in Woodbridge, Suffolk believed to date *c.* 560. Although the burial ground had always been known because of 20 earthen burial mounds, it was excavated for the first time in 1939 by the then owner, Edith May Pretty. It was decided that, since the treasure was buried without the intention to recover it, it was legally the property of Mrs Pretty, but she bequeathed it to the nation in its entirety and it now resides in the British Museum.

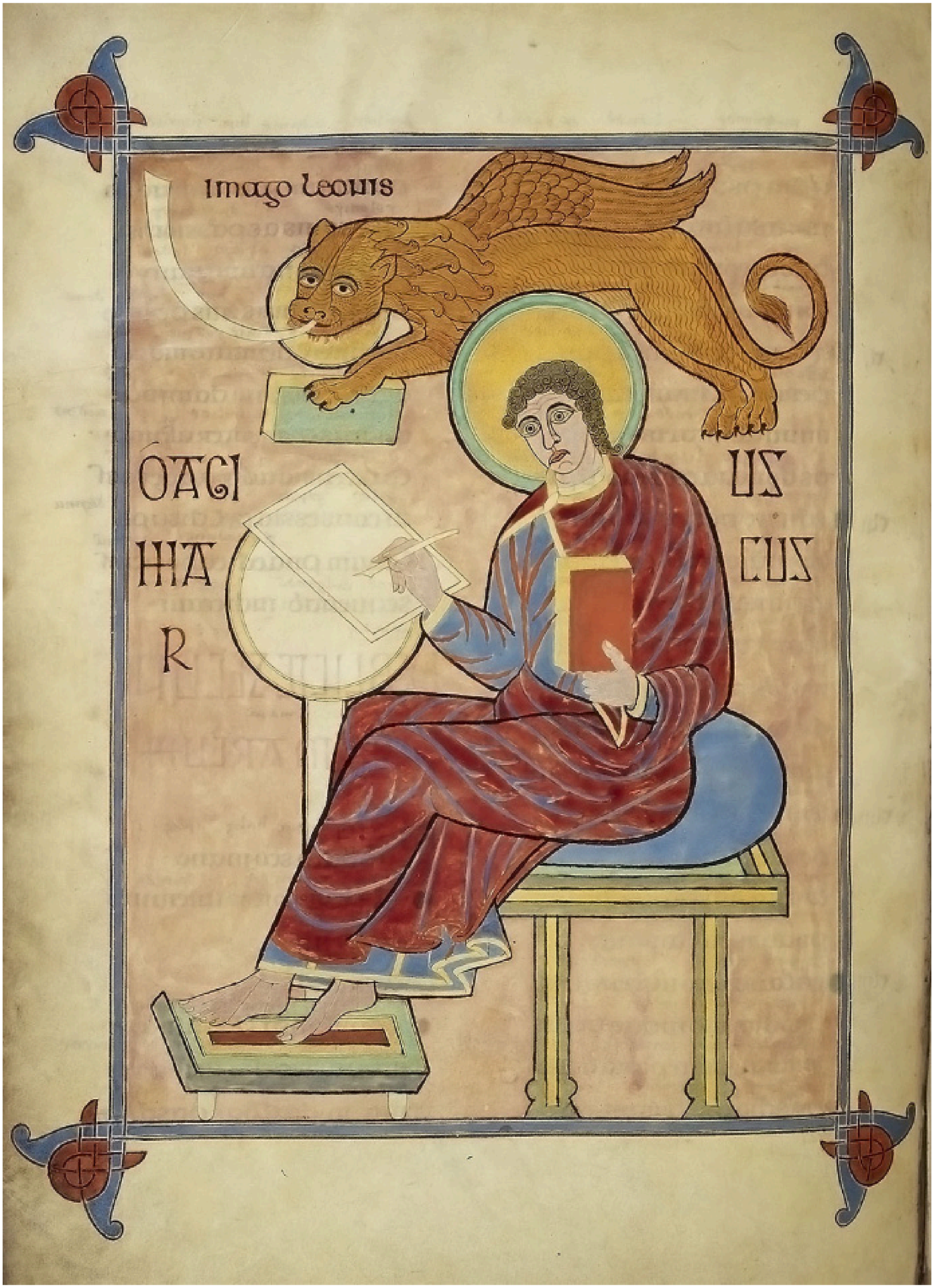


Vikings disembarking in England during the second wave of migration (painting on vellum). Scandinavian, 10th century AD.

The 20 or so barrows are in an area reserved for individuals buried with objects denoting unusual wealth and prestige. In one barrow the ashes of a man placed on a horse were discovered with all his possessions. The most spectacular and famous barrow contained a 90-foot longboat made of oak, with positions for 40 oarsmen and a central burial chamber. The 'crested' helmet found next to the likely body position, with its die-struck panels and assembled mounts, is comparable to the helmets found in the Vendel and Valsgarde cemeteries of eastern Sweden, indicating the probable origin of the occupant of the grave. Next to the helmet were a set of ten silver bowls, made in the Eastern Empire in the sixth century, and two silver spoons from Byzantium. One large round silver platter was made in the Eastern Empire around ad 500 and bears the control stamps of Emperor Anastasias (491-518). The burial chamber also contained the occupant's sword harness, scabbard mounts and numerous gold and garnet objects, such as the famous shoulder clasps, belt buckles and purse lids.

A purse contained 37 gold shillings, each with a different Frankish mint. There were also three blank coins and two small ingots which presumably, like the Roman *obulus*, were to pay for the 40 ghostly oarsmen of the underworld. There were numerous examples of Mediterranean silverware and drinking horns, textiles, metal objects, jewellery, weapons, bronze and glass.

Sutton Hoo provides the cornerstone for artistic studies in England from the sixth to ninth centuries. It shows that there must have been a flourishing art market at this date which defies earlier studies of the so-called 'Dark Ages'. The Roman and Byzantine origins of the objects show that they had been traded or looted from all over Europe. The burial of these items shows how important they were considered, how valuable they were, and the lengths to which the Viking raiders were prepared to go to steal them.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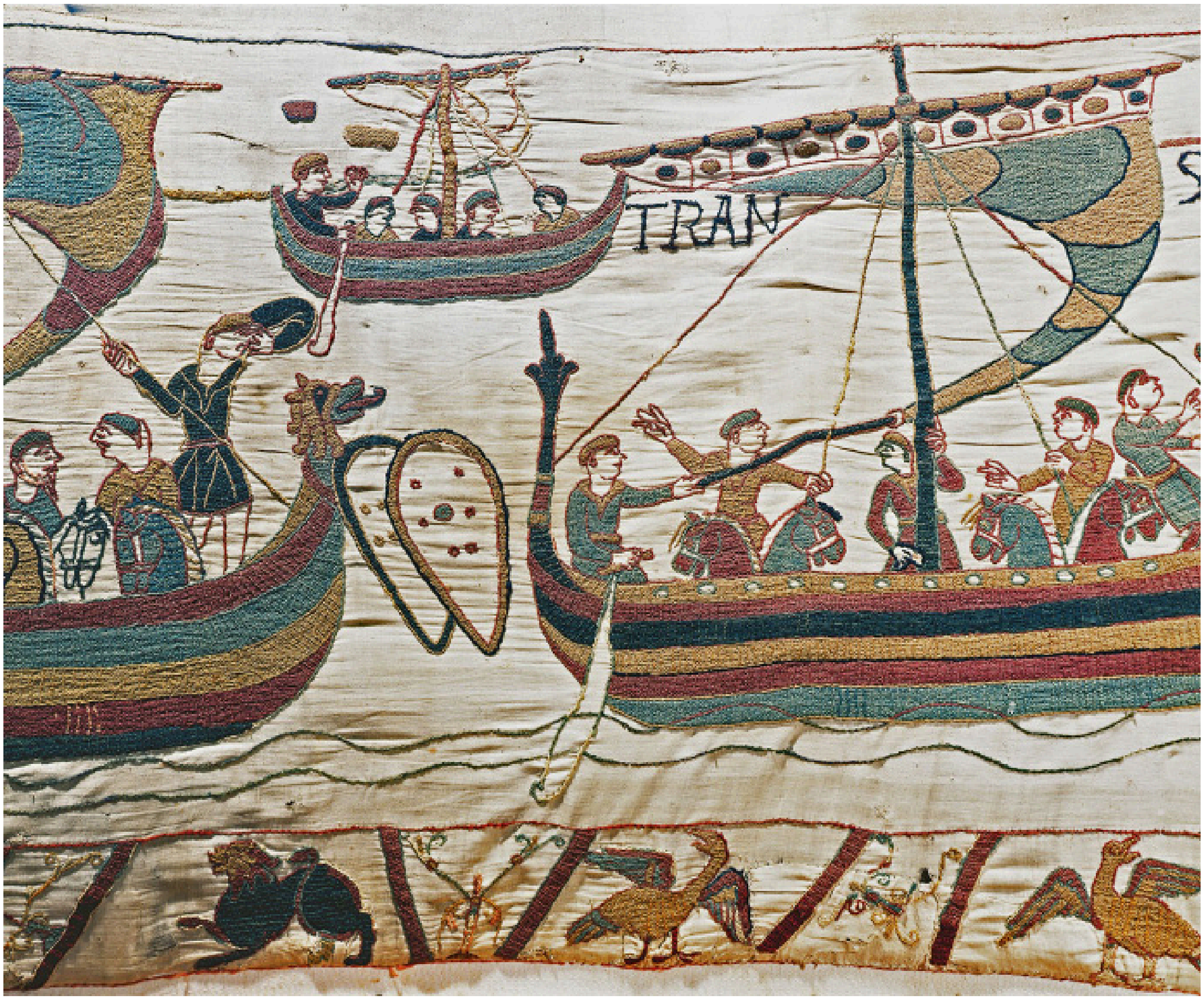
The Lindisfarne Gospels (720 AD) Saint Mark.

In 2007 two untouched Viking boat burials, dating from around AD 800, were discovered in Norway by Danish archaeologists about 350 miles from Oslo. One was a woman buried alongside jewellery, a knife, a bronze bowl, scissors, and pearls. Nearby, there was a boat burial with a man's and a child's tomb, leading scientists to believe it was a family burial ground.

In Europe much of the Viking's trade was with the monasteries, which were rich and mainly undefended. The Viking invasion of England began dramatically with the destruction of the Abbey of Lindisfarne, on an island off the Northumberland coast, on 6th January 793. The monastery sits on a hill on a tiny island connected to the mainland by a causeway accessible twice a day at low tide. The monastery was undefended as the monks were revered in their local community and had never envisaged an attack from the sea.

Many people had donated gold and silver to the monastery as they believed that gifts to religious institutions helped the soul attain heaven. The treasury on Lindisfarne contained golden crucifixes, coiled shepherd staves, silver plates for the bread and wine of mass and ivory chests for the relics of saints. Fine tapestries covered the walls of the chapel, and the writing room housed precious manuscripts from the early medieval world. The illuminated manuscript of the eighth century known as the Lindisfarne Gospels, an illustrated copy in Latin of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, somehow survived and is today housed in the British Library in London.



The Bayeux tapestry (11th century AD). Norman fleet under William the Conqueror (1027-87), on his way to be crowned King William I of England.

The Vikings hacked the monks to death and drowned the remainder of the inhabitants in the sea. They destroyed everything they didn't consider of value before loading the booty onto their longships. This unexpected and brutal theft sent shockwaves around the courts of Europe. The haul of art must have been of great value to the invaders when it reached Scandinavia and instigated 300 years of terror and invasion from the blond Norse raiders from the sea.

Alcuin of York (*c.* 730-804), an English monk, noted, 'Never before has such terror appeared in Britain as we have now suffered from a pagan race... The heathens poured out the blood of saints around the altar, and trampled on the bodies of saints in the temple of God, like dung in the streets'.[21] According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, fighting parties of Vikings continued to raid Britain over the next several hundred years. They stole anything of value, including art. The monasteries with their treasuries were the biggest prize and most suffered attacks. In 795 they attacked the monasteries of Ireland's west coast and also looted the island of Iona off the Scottish coast. By 840 the Vikings started establishing their own bases on the British mainland. The raiders, and later the settlers, introduced many words into the English language such as 'husband', 'wife' and 'window'. Many English towns retain their Viking names ending in 'by' like Selby or Whitby (of which there are 201 in Yorkshire alone) and those ending in 'thorpe' like Scunthorpe.

Once much of Britain's monastic treasure had been looted, the Vikings started settling in Britain, cultivating land and intermarrying. Much of the art created at this time showed the artistic styles intermingled. Anglo-Saxon and Celtic knot work, metalwork, stone carving and jewellery are all similar to the Viking work. Both cultures developed a passion for scroll work, foliage motifs and ribboned patterns of interwoven bodies of animals, snakes and knots.

The end of the Viking age is linked to the defeat by Harald Godwinson in 1066 of the last great Norwegian warrior king, Harald Hadrada, at the battle of Stamford Bridge. However, the decline in the raiding parties is also probably connected to their conversion to Christianity in the tenth century. The last major invasion of England by a Viking king was that of William the Conqueror, also in 1066. Normandy was, after all, a Viking kingdom that had been established in the ninth century.

William invaded England with a mere 8500 troops and defeated Harald Godwinson at the close-run battle of Hastings before seizing England and the English throne. William had raised troops from Brittany, southern France and as far as Italy for his invasion. The Bretons had traditionally been enemies of William's but he promised them a share in the spoils. Nobles were promised land and titles, and castles with their contents; rank and file were promised loot. Most of the commanders at Hastings, whose crests of arms are printed on the Battle Roll, were duly rewarded with earldoms and vast land holdings. The local aristocracy was eliminated within 4 years and the Normans either took their castles or built their own.

William took 17% of England's landmass and the top twelve barons were given a quarter of the rest, a land grab only equalled by Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries in the sixteenth century. All property, including artworks, manuscripts, silver and gold plate became Norman property and was distributed as agreed pre-invasion.

However, when William came to audit his new kingdom and commissioned the Doomsday Book in 1085 it omitted artworks and valuables on the whole and concentrated on the value of land and its assets. Valuables and artworks must have been considered personal property, not belonging to the king and therefore untaxable. The Doomsday Book recorded land, people, acreage, animals, fish, equipment and buildings, and provides an illuminating and unique census of the time. It is today housed in the National Archives in Kew.

Also at the time of the Vikings was the Moorish invasion of Spain. In April 711 the Arab governor of Tangiers, Tariq ibn-Ziyad crossed the straits between what is now Morocco and Spain with 10,000 Berbers. He landed at the rock of Jabal Tariq, or Gibraltar, and defeated the Goth King Roderick. Ziyad was reinforced by Musa, the governor of North Africa with a further 18,000 men. After a series of battles over the next 3 years, the entire Iberian Peninsula, apart from a few isolated pockets in the north, became known as Al-Andalus, a province of the Caliphate of Damascus in what is now Syria.

Spain at that time was a backward provincial country with a Hispano-Roman population ruled by Goths who were detested by the local population. After the Moorish invasion, Cordoba's population grew to over 500,000 and the city rivalled Constantinople as Europe's leading cultural centre with 700 mosques, 600 palaces and 70 libraries, the largest of which contained over 500,000 books. Advances were made in maths, philosophy, astronomy and medicine, greatly influencing the intellectual life of medieval Europe.

This was a time of brutal and bloody dictatorship. In Spain there wasn't much art to steal but the Moors used their new lands as a base to launch raiding parties against the Christian Spanish kingdoms in the north, the Basque regions, France and the Rhone valley. They stole booty and slaves and wreaked destruction along the Sicilian and Italian coasts, looting and burning as far as the Aeolian Islands. Thousands of people were deported to slavery in Andalucía, where the Caliph kept a militia of tens of thousands of Christian slaves from all over Christian Europe and a harem full of Christian women.

The Alhambra, Granada (14th century AD).

The Moors felt superior in terms of art, culture and blood. On their raiding parties they stole what they could sell but had little interest in Western art unless it had monetary value as coin or metal. Society was sharply divided along ethnic and religious lines. The Arab tribes were at the top, followed by the Berbers who were Islamic brothers but not equal. Then came the converts to Islam of which there were plenty as it is estimated that three-quarters of the local population converted. Finally at the bottom were the *dhimmi* (non-Muslim subjects in a state governed according to Sharia law), Jews and Christians.

The Moors reserved a particular hatred for the Jews. The Andalusian Maliki jurist Ibn Abdun (d. 1134) offered these legal opinions around 1100:

> No ... Jew or Christian may be allowed to wear the dress of an aristocrat, nor of a jurist, nor of a wealthy individual; on the contrary they must be detested and avoided. It is forbidden to [greet] them with the [expression], ‘Peace be upon you’. In effect, Satan has gained possession of them, and caused them to forget God’s warning. They are the confederates of Satan’s party; Satan’s confederates will surely be the losers! A distinctive sign must be imposed upon them in order that they may be recognized and this will be for them a form of disgrace.[22]

Whole Christian and Jewish libraries were looted. Books of interest were moved to Cordoba’s enormous libraries and anything supportive to Christianity or Judaism was destroyed. Another prominent Andalusian jurist, Ibn Hazm of Cordoba (d. 1064), wrote that Allah had established the infidels’ ownership of their property merely to provide booty for Muslims, an original justification for looting.

In the pogrom of Granada in 1066, 5000 Jews were killed. Thousands of Christians were deported to Morocco in 1126. Moses Maimonides, the thirteenth-century Jewish philosopher wrote, ‘...the Arabs have persecuted us severely, and passed baneful and discriminatory legislation against us... Never did a nation molest, degrade, debase, and hate us as much as they’.[23]

Churches were converted into mosques or destroyed and resistance was dealt with by burning at the stake or crucifixion. The rulers from North Africa introduced Malikism, one of the most rigorous schools of Islamic jurisprudence, which subsequently dominated the other Muslim schools of law. The Koran's teaching on punishment was closely followed:

> The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter;
>
> Sura 005, Verse 033, Koran. Translation by Yusuf Ali (1938)[24]

Amidst this terrifying empire the Moors produced some of the finest Islamic architecture ever built, including the Mesquite Mosque of Cordoba and the palace of the Alhambra in Granada. In the Alhambra most surfaces are decorated with the lightest of Islamic patterned decoration, and moving water everywhere gives a feeling of lightness and impermanence. After 700 years of occupation, the last stronghold of the Moors at Granada fell to the Christian north in 1492 and, with the capitulation of the Moorish king Muhammad abu Abdallah, Moorish rule ended in Spain.

Raiding parties of Vikings arrived in the Iberian Peninsula as early as the late ninth century (in 859, 966 and 1008), but they found the Moors and last remaining Christian enclaves in the north locked in bitter struggle and in possession of seasoned and experienced armies - a completely different challenge to the undefended monasteries of northern Europe. The first Viking raiding party arrived in 844 and sacked Gijon on the north coast and disembarked at La Coruna before being beaten back to sea by the Asturian King, Ramiro I of Aragon.

The expedition of 859, under the 'Jarls' Bjorn 'Iron Rib' and Hastein was the largest raiding party ever assembled by the Vikings and lasted 3 years, attacking Spain, Italy, France and Byzantium. Although they completely destroyed the Balearic Islands, they avoided Spain after early incursions because the Moors proved tough opposition.

The third major raid came between 966-71 with a combination of Danes and Norwegians under 'Jarl' Gundread. With 100 boats and 8000 men he plundered the Galician coast and even attacked Compostela in 970. As the Vikings started to convert to Christianity around this time, later expeditions actually included pilgrimages to Compostela before raiding the Moors in the south. In 1008 a raid was led by the Viking king, Olaf Haraldsson (1015-1030), who participated in the attack on Tuy in 1015 when the raiding party sailed up the Mino River, destroyed the city and captured the bishop Don Alfonso. Haraldsson then emptied all the monasteries before destroying them on his way back through Portugal.

The famous Mihrab dome in the great Mosque of Cordoba.

In the twelfth century there were further raids by the Norwegian King Surgard, who stopped in Galicia for the winter of 1109 on his route to the Holy Land. Once he found out it was Christian, he defended it from other Norse attacks before sailing on to raid Formentera, Ibiza and Minorca.

Since the Vikings never settled in Spain, these expeditions were purely after loot that they could take away in their ships, such as gold and silver objects, coin, religious artefacts and manuscripts. This legacy has left Scandinavia with extensive holdings of Islamic art. A recent international survey by Karin Adahl and Michael Ahlund of Islamic art collections in museums, libraries and institutions shows that Sweden has examples of Islamic art in 21 institutions, one of the largest collections of any country, with extensive holdings in Stockholm, Lund and Malmö.[25] Some of this Islamic treasure dates from the Viking raids and some from later collecting stimulated by the Viking treasure. Some also came from looting by later Swedish kings such as Gustavus II and Queen Christina (see Chapter 6).

In Central Europe the greatest ruler of the period was Charlemagne (742-814), King of the Franks, who personally led 53 campaigns. He created the Empire of the Franks by conquering Bavaria and Saxony, destroying the Avars who occupied modern-day Hungary and defending Italy and France from the raiding Moors and Vikings. With his capital at Aachen, he controlled all the peoples between the Vistula and the Atlantic, the Baltic and the Pyrenees, nearly all of Italy and much of the Balkans. He controlled his empire with strong military organisation backed up with firm religious support and ritual. Although he couldn’t read or write, contemporary historians relate that his strength of character and vitality could lead an army, persuade an assembly to his way of thinking, dominate the clergy, placate and confuse his rivals and satisfy his four wives, five mistresses and extensive harem who bore him 18 children.

Charlemagne codified medieval law and legislated in the areas of industry, finance, education, government, morals and religion. How one man can have achieved so much is hard to comprehend. Despite his own illiteracy, at a time when hardly anyone except ecclesiastics could read, he called in scholars to restore the schools of France. Although he was in a position to have stolen sizable quantities of medieval treasure such as manuscripts and precious religious artefacts, he reportedly never gave his armies any specific instructions on looting or raiding. When he was sent precious items by his armies he didn't keep them but distributed them among his clergy, nobles and advisers. His preferred clothing was the simple dress of the Franks, linen shirt and breeches covered by a woollen tunic except on occasions of state when he wore a crown (preserved today in Aachen) and the decorated and jewelled clothing befitting an emperor.

Charlemagne was, however, interested in architecture and commissioned palaces at Ingelheim, Nijmegen and at Aachen, his capital and final resting place, where he placed a small amount of art and precious religious artefacts. The Royal Church at Aachen was modelled on the church of San Vitale at Ravenna, which owed its form to Byzantine and Syrian designs. He filled the interior with gold, silver and bronze ornaments and a famous mosaic from Ravenna given to him by Pope Hadrian I. When Charlemagne returned from his coronation in Rome, he ordered the removal of an equestrian portrait of Theodoric from Ravenna, which became a centrepiece in Aachen, but is now lost.

Charlemagne's attitude towards loot was illustrated when two of his Frankish armies defeated the Avars in Pannonia (in modern Hungary) in 795 and captured the Khagan's residence known as the 'Ring', which was full of his treasure. Convoys of loot were dispatched back to Charlemagne, who sent some of it to the new Pope, Leo III, and distributed the rest. The Lorsch Annals confirm that, 'giving thanks to the almighty king, he distributed the treasure among the churches and bishops, abbots and counts, and also rewarded all his *fideles* from it in wondrous fashion'.[26]

Those *fideles* included the Anglo-Saxons, and in a famous letter written dictated by Charlemagne to the English King Offa of Mercia in 796 he said, 'we have sent something to each of the Metropolitan cities, and to your love... we have sent a sword-belt, and an Aver sword and two lengths of silk'.[27] Giving treasure to the English archbishoprics and to Offa demonstrated the Frankish spirit of generosity and *fidelitas* and also sent a reminder that the distribution of wealth of a defeated tribe was the final humiliation of what befell those who opposed him. It appears that Charlemagne was most interested in precious items for their power as a symbol and their value as a gift.

[1] Livius, Titus (Livy), 25.40. 1-3, translated by A. de Selincourt (Livy, *The War with Hannibal,* Books XXI-XXX of the History of Rome from its Foundation, Penguin, 1965, p. 350-351.)

[2] Sack, Ronald Herbert, *Images of Nebuchadnezzar, the Emergence of a Legend,* Susquehanna University Press, 2003, p. 48.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 49.

4 *Ibid.,* p. 49.

5 Wellard, James, *Babylon,* Saturday Review Press, New York, 1972, p. 156, www.plinia.net/wonders/gardens/hg4diodorus.html.

6 Xenophon of Athens, Life of Cyrus, 3.3.44.

7 Siculus, Diodorus, quoted in Pierre Briant, *Alexander the Great, Man of Action, Man of Spirit,* Harry Abrams, p. 71.

8 Strabo, *Geographica,* 2.1.9.

9 Arrian, *Campaigns of Alexander, 2nd century AD,* quoted in Pierre Briant, op. cit., p. 36.

10 Euclid, *Elements,* 8th book, Proposition 2.

11 Livy, V, 3-8, quoted in J.J. Pollitt, *The Art of Rome c. 753 BC-337 AD (1966).* This event is famous as an early example of Roman art imperialism.

12 Florus, *Epitomae I,* 13, 26-27, in Pollitt, *op. cit.,* p. 23.

13 Pliny, *N.H. XXXIV,* 34, in Pollitt, *op. cit.,* p. 25.

14 Plutarch, *Life of Lucullus,* 37, in Pollitt, *op. cit.,* p. 64.

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17 Miles, Margaret A., *Art as Plunder,* Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 280.

18 Cameron, Averil and Herrin, Judith (for 1984 translation), *Constantinople in the 8th century: The Parastaseis Syntomei Chronikai.*

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20 Mommsen, Theodore E., 'Petrarch's Conception of the Dark Ages', *Speculum* 17, (2): 226-242, Cambridge MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1942.

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22 Yeor, Bat, 'Andalusian Myth, Eurabian Reality', *Dhimmi Watch,* April 21st, 2004, p. 4.

23 *Ibid.,* p. 5.

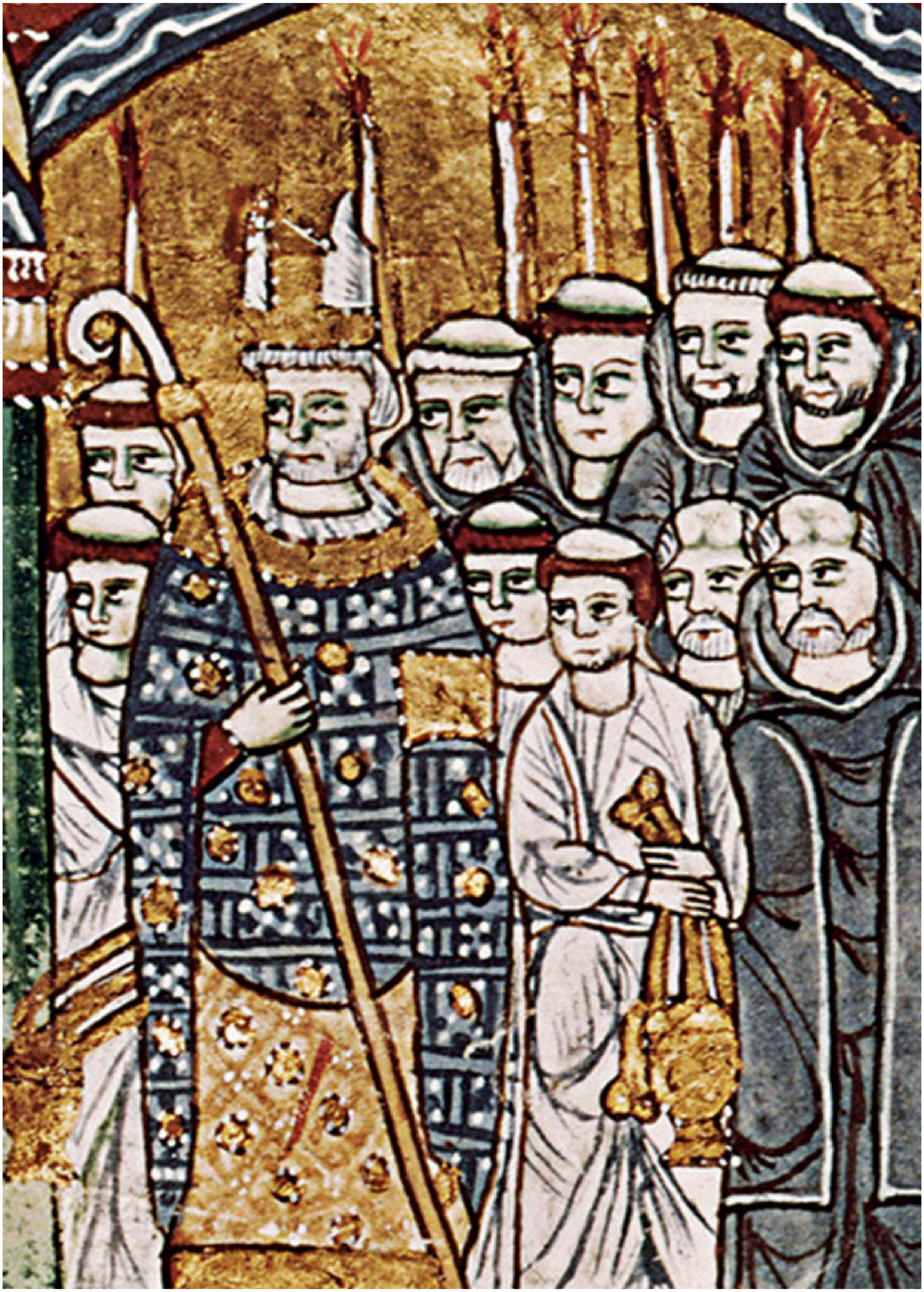
24 *Ibid.,* p. 6.

25 Adahl, Karin and Ahlund, Michael, *Islamic Art Collections: An International Survey,* Routledge, 2000.

26 *8th Century Annals of Lorsch,* quoted in J. Thatcher and Edgar Holmes McNeal, *A Sourcebook for Medieval History,* Scribners, 1905.

27 Stenton, F.M., *Anglo Saxon England,* 3rd Edition, Oxford, 1971, p. 215.

2 - The Crusades and the sack of Constantinople



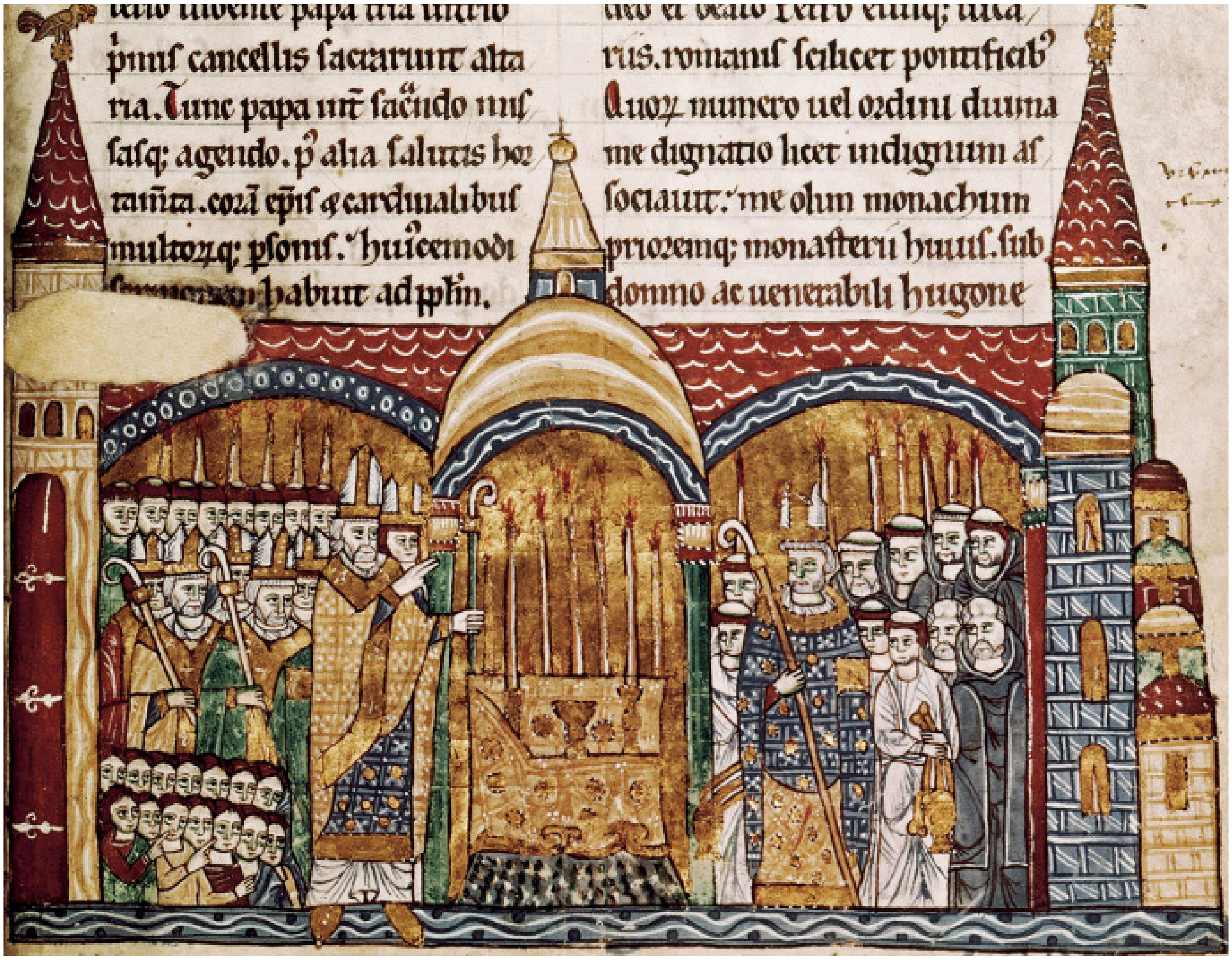
Detail of Pope Urban II speaking at the dedication of the high altar of the newly-built church at Cluny.

> How shall I begin to tell of the deeds wrought by these nefarious men! Alas, the images, which ought to have been adored, were trodden under foot! Alas, the relics of the holy martyrs were thrown into unclean places! ... They snatched the precious reliquaries, thrust into their bosoms the ornaments which these contained, and used the broken remnants for pans and drinking cups ... Nay more, a certain harlot, a sharer in their guilt, a minister of the furies, a servant of the demons, a worker of incantations and poisonings, insulting Christ, sat in the patriarch's seat, singing an obscene song and dancing frequently.
>
> - Niketas Choniates in an eye-witness account on the crusader troops inside Hagia Sofia during the sack of Constantinople.[1])

The Roman practice of aggressive art imperialism was revived under the Crusades, a series of military campaigns waged by Christian Europe against the Muslim East. Crusade comes from the Latin for cross and the crusaders received the blessing of the church, took vows and were granted an indulgence for past sins.

The campaigns were also directed against the Jews, Slavs, Mongols, Tartars, Cathars and even the Russian and Greek Orthodox Christians. During the course of the crusades, Acre, Antioch, Jerusalem, Tripoli and Constantinople were sacked and pillaged. The northern crusades reached as far as Pskov and Novgorod and the eastern crusades conquered the southern Steppe to the Dnieper River and the northern Crimea.

Although the first four crusades are the most famous, culminating in the complete sack of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade, they continued until the end of the seventeenth century with the crusades of Lepanto in 1571, Hungary in 1664 and Candia (modern Crete) in 1669. The Knights Hospitalier continued their crusade in the Mediterranean until their defeat at Malta in 1798 by Napoleon. There were also frequent minor crusades during this whole period throughout the Iberian Peninsula, Central Europe and Palestine against Muslims, Christian heretics and other personal enemies of popes and European monarchs.



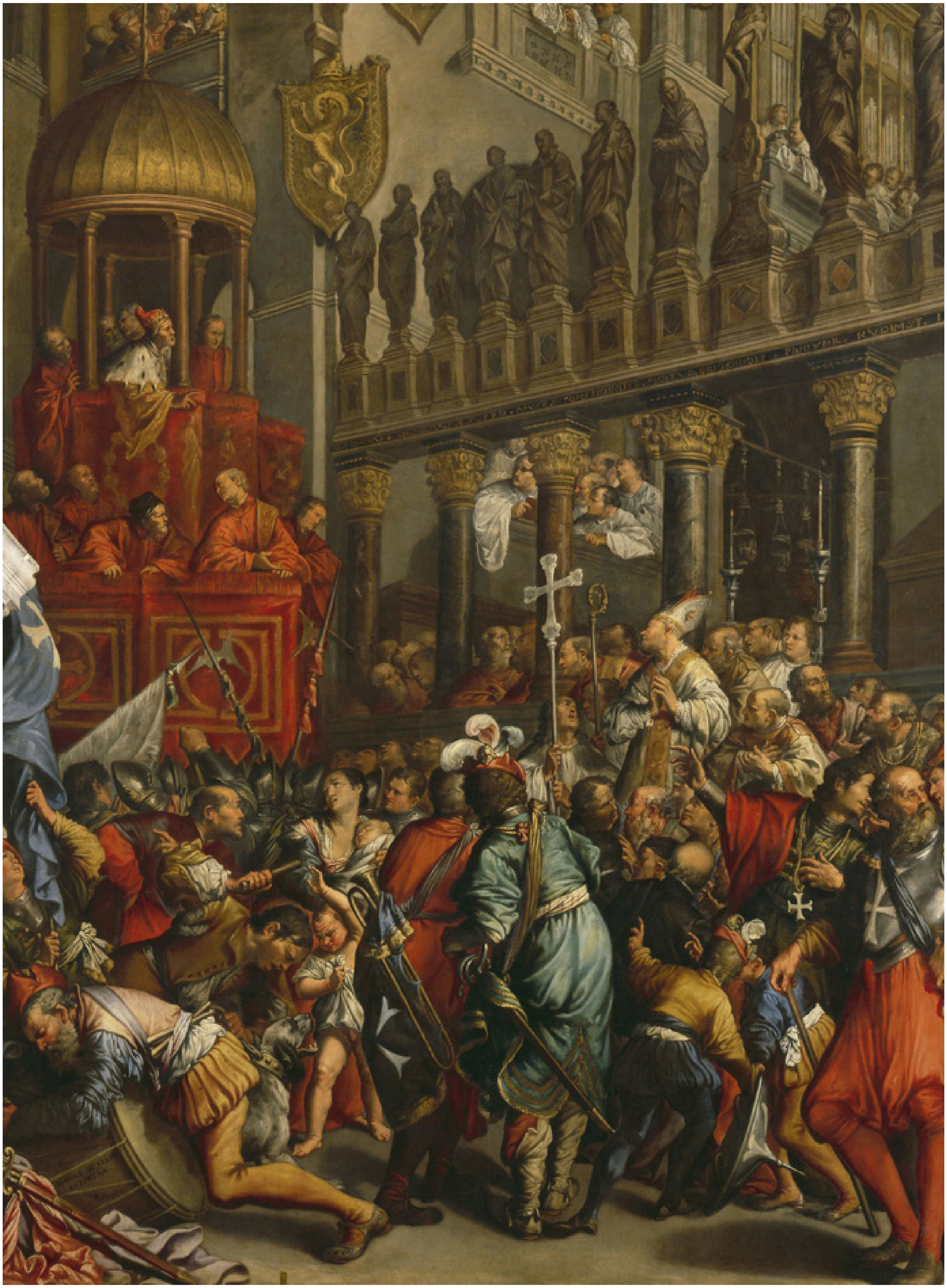
Pope Urban II dedicating the high altar of the newly-built church at Cluny. Ms. Illumination *c.* 1095 AD.

To Muslims the Crusades were Western invasions motivated by greed and hatred for Islam. The Muslims, perhaps forgetful of their own behaviour in Spain during the eighth century, were horrified by the brutality of the Franks and the ease with which they massacred civilians and broke promises. The Crusades had long-term political and social repercussions and led the Muslims into isolation and retreat behind the barriers of extreme Islamic thinking.

The aim of the First Crusade was to recapture Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Muslims, and it was launched after an appeal from the Byzantine Emperor to Pope Urban II for help against the Turks. The idea of a Holy War and the formation of a Christian army against the Muslims appealed to both the medieval secular and religious mind. Many of the Muslim lands had been Christian prior to their Islamic conquest, such as those that had formed parts of the Byzantine and Roman Empires, including Egypt, Syria, North Africa, Spain, Cyprus and Judea. But most importantly, Jerusalem and its surroundings, where Jesus had lived and died, was sacred to Christians.

In the eleventh century, preaching by monks such as Peter the Hermit and Walter the Penniless spread reports of Muslims abusing Christian pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem and other holy sites and whipped up crusader zeal. The caliph Al-Hakim-bi-Amr Allah began to persecute the Christians of Palestine and in 1009 he destroyed Christianity's most sacred shrine, the Holy Sepulchre. At the same time the Seljuk Turks, aggressive and stringent followers of extreme Islam, cracked down on Christians in Palestine and barbaric stories of persecution began to filter back to the West.

In March 1095, Alexius I sent envoys to the Council of Piacenza to ask for help from Pope Urban II to deal with the Turks. Urban saw the opportunity to heal rifts between the Orthodox Church of Constantinople and the Western Church of Rome. At the Council of Clermont on 27th November 1095, Urban summoned the audience to wrest control of Jerusalem back from the Muslims. He spoke of God's soldiers and asked that 'robbers become knights'. He spoke of reward in heaven and, perhaps crucially, on earth also, which was later interpreted as a coded permission to start looting. The crowd was stirred into a frenzy of enthusiasm and kept interrupting his words with the call, 'Deus lo volt!' (It is God's will).



4th crusade 1202-04. ***The Doge Enrico Dandolo swearing an oath to the pact with the crusaders in St. Mark's in Venice.*** **(1202). Painting, 1619, by Carlo Saraceni (*c.* 1580/85-1620), completed by Jean Leclerc (1587-1633). Venice, Doge's Palace.**

Urban, together with his bishops and legates, spread the word through France, Germany and Italy. The message appealed to both rich and poor, particularly the poor, who saw a chance for some excitement, perhaps riches, and an opportunity to escape the grinding poverty of their medieval existence. Before the main crusade departed, an army of 40,000 peasants and petty nobles set off under the charismatic leadership of a priest named Peter the Hermit of Amiens. Unorganised and chaotic, they started looting to survive and were set upon by Hungarians, Bulgarians and even the Byzantines. They lost 10,000 men before crossing the Bosporus, upon which they were massacred by the Seljuk Turks. The peasantry were never so keen on crusading after this brutal introduction.

The main crusade under Raymond IV of Toulouse, joined by a Byzantine army in Constantinople, eventually arrived in the Holy Land. Looting was high on their agenda when they reached Nicaea, an old Byzantine city. The Byzantine Emperor secured the surrender of the city to stop the crusaders looting its rich treasury, causing increased tension between the two armies. Along the route the crusaders destroyed and looted the cities of Sozopolis, Iconium and Caeserea, despite losing many men to the heat and starvation.

On 20th October 1097 they arrived at Antioch, midway between Constantinople and Jerusalem and began an 8-month siege. With conditions as bad for the crusaders as inside the city, they finally managed to take it through treachery on behalf of some of the occupants. However, the Muslims immediately besieged the city in return. The rediscovery of a Holy Lance, deemed a miracle, seems to have improved morale and the crusaders finally possessed the city. Exhausted and weakened by infighting about who was to rule the city, one of the most important in the Roman and Christian world, the leaders were unable to control the looting. Behemond of Taranto persuaded the Crusade to let him have the city as a principality since he had been the first up a ladder during the siege. He managed to reduce looting to a minimum and became Behemond I, Prince of Antioch.

The remaining crusaders under Raymond of Toulouse headed south and besieged Jerusalem with their reduced army of only 12,000 men. After a siege and huge losses due to starvation, they finally entered the city on 15th July 1099. Exhausted, they massacred almost the entire population of

40,000, including Muslims, Jews and even Eastern Christians. According to Fulcher of Chartres: ‘Indeed, if you had been there you would have seen our feet coloured to our ankles with the blood of the slain. But what more shall I relate? None of them were left alive; neither women nor children were spared’.[2]

The anonymous *Gesta Francorum* continues,

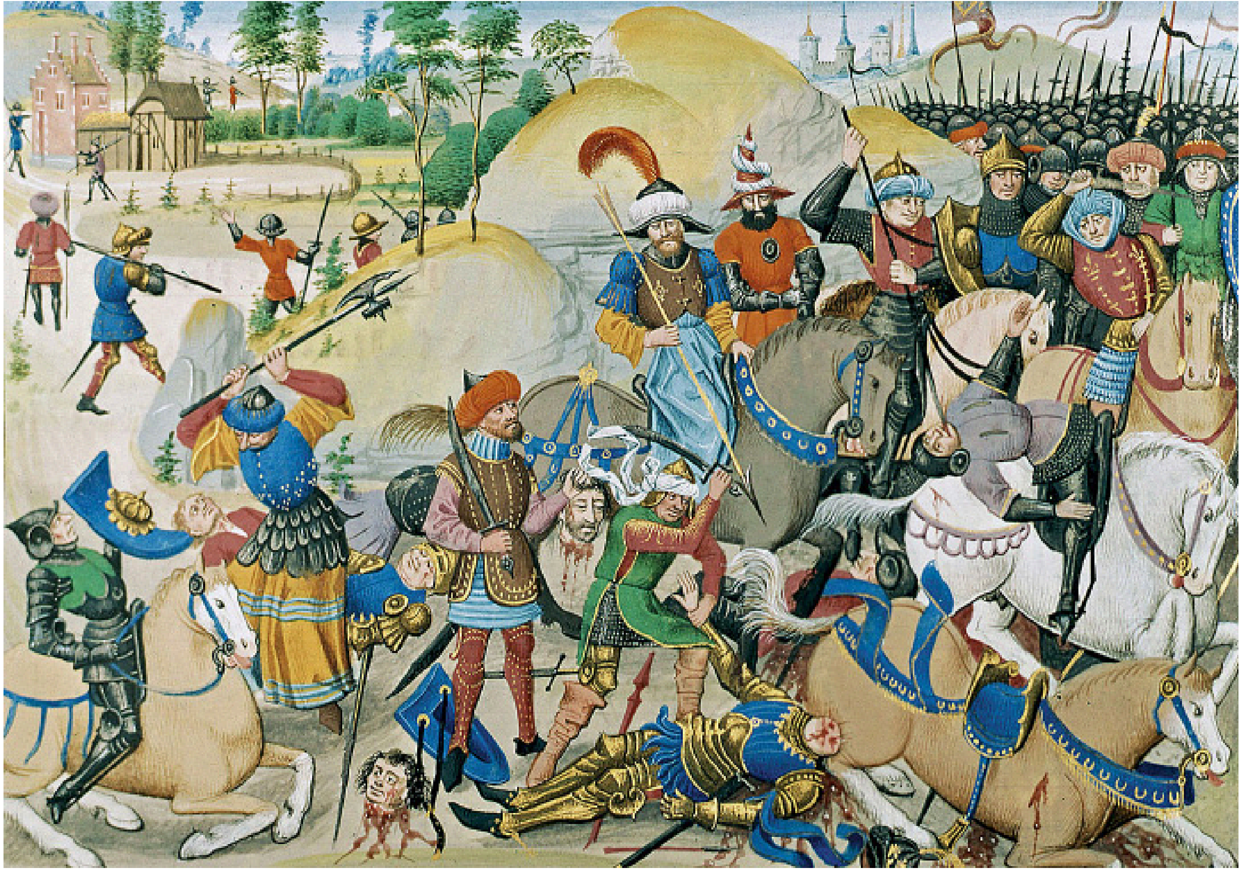
> [Our leaders] also ordered all the Saracen dead to be cast outside because of the great stench, since the whole city was filled with their corpses; and so the living Saracens dragged the dead before the exits of the gates and arranged them in heaps, as if they were houses. No one ever saw or heard of such slaughter of pagan people, for funeral pyres were formed from them like pyramids, and no one knows their number except God alone.[3]

Many Muslims sheltered in the Al-Aqsa Mosque, where, according to one account in the Gesta Francorum, ‘the slaughter was so great that our men waded in blood up to their ankles’.[4] According to Raymond of Aguilers, ‘men rode in blood up to their knees and bridle reins’.[5] This is probably exaggerated but the butchery was certainly atrocious. The chronicle of Ibn al-Qalanisi states that the Jewish defenders sought refuge in their synagogue, but the ‘Franks burned it over their heads’, killing everyone inside and circled the flaming building while singing ‘Christ, We Adore Thee!’.[6] Having captured Jerusalem and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the crusaders left for home taking all the loot they could carry. A few hundred remained in the city and helped set up the crusader states of Edessa, Antioch, Jerusalem and Tripoli, which were slowly and meticulously looted over the next 40 years.

The Crusades were fought with several aims: to stop the spread of Islam, to free the Holy Land and to unify the Eastern and Western Christian Church, all of which they failed to do. In effect, the Crusades hastened the decline of the Byzantine Church, invigorated Muslim resistance and caused a rift between the two churches that has remained unhealed to the present day.

The Second and Third Crusades met with limited success and it was when the Fourth Crusade was diverted from its original intention of invading the Holy Land through Egypt to destroying Constantinople that most of the damage was done.

The Fourth Crusade was called by Pope Innocent III in 1196. It required launching a maritime expedition to Cairo with ships the French didn't have. The French turned to Venice, which was ruled by the blind Doge Enrico Dandolo, for the ships. Venice hated Constantinople and the old Doge immediately saw the potential to divert the expedition to destroy Venice's old enemy.



Battle waged against the Saracens 1100-05 by Raymond IV, de St Gilles, Count of Toulouse, *c.* 1041-1105, manuscript illumination, *c.* 1460, from the Chronique des Empereurs.

Venice agreed to supply transport for 33,500 crusaders, which required a full year of shipbuilding and a commitment of a third of the men of Venice (20,000) to sail and row the ships. The crusading army was expected to consist of 4500 knights plus their horses, 9000 squires and 20,000 foot soldiers but only 12,000 in total arrived. Venice had built the required ships and wanted payment in full, but the crusaders could only pay 51,000 marks of the required 85,000.

Dandolo agreed to let them sail if they repaid the debt by attacking and looting the port of Zara in Dalmatia, knowing that if they were successful, they would probably continue on and do the same to Constantinople, a much bigger prize. Despite his desire to secure papal authority over Byzantium, Innocent III wrote a letter forbidding the crusaders from committing any atrocious acts on their Christian neighbours. This letter was concealed from the bulk of the army, and Dandolo agreed with the crusaders that all loot and art was to be distributed evenly.

The citizens of Zara hung banners marked with the cross from the windows of the fortress, but the crusaders quickly took the city before heading on to Constantinople. The Pope now lost control of the Crusade to the hands of the politicians, soldiers and adventurers.

The Greeks themselves were not entirely blameless in the plot against the city. The Emperor Isaac had earlier been deposed by his brother, Alexius III, and Isaac's son Alexius (the Younger) made Dandolo an offer that he would pay 200,000 silver marks, put up an army to fight against Islam, assign 500 knights for life to guard the Holy Land, and offer submission of the Eastern Church, in exchange for help in regaining the throne. Later, he couldn't raise the money, which further annoyed the crusaders.

As the armies stood before Constantinople, inside the walls most of the inhabitants were Orthodox Christians and outside the walls the men wore crosses on their mantles and called themselves Christians. It was Holy Week in 1204. Constantinople was the most powerful and richest city in the world, with 150 churches and countless monuments, libraries, monasteries, palaces, towers, bazaars, arenas and forums. The crusaders, many from small villages of medieval France, stood in awe before the massive walls of the Imperial city founded by Emperor Constantine nearly 1000 years earlier.

The city was a place of learning and culture, called 'Tsargrad' by the Russians, and the centre of the civilised world. Here was more wealth than in the rest of Europe including the accumulated gold of the later Roman Empire. The crowning glory was Hagia Sofia (Holy Wisdom), one of the wonders of the world built by Justinian six centuries earlier.

Over 100 churches were dedicated to the protectress of the city, Theotokos, who it was believed had saved the city from earlier attacks from the Avars and the Russians. Countless churches housed Christian relics of Saints Timothy, Andrew, Stephen and James, and one also contained the wood of the True Cross found by St Helena. Faced with such a Christian presence, some of the men had doubts about attacking.

Robert of Cari in an eye witness account records that:

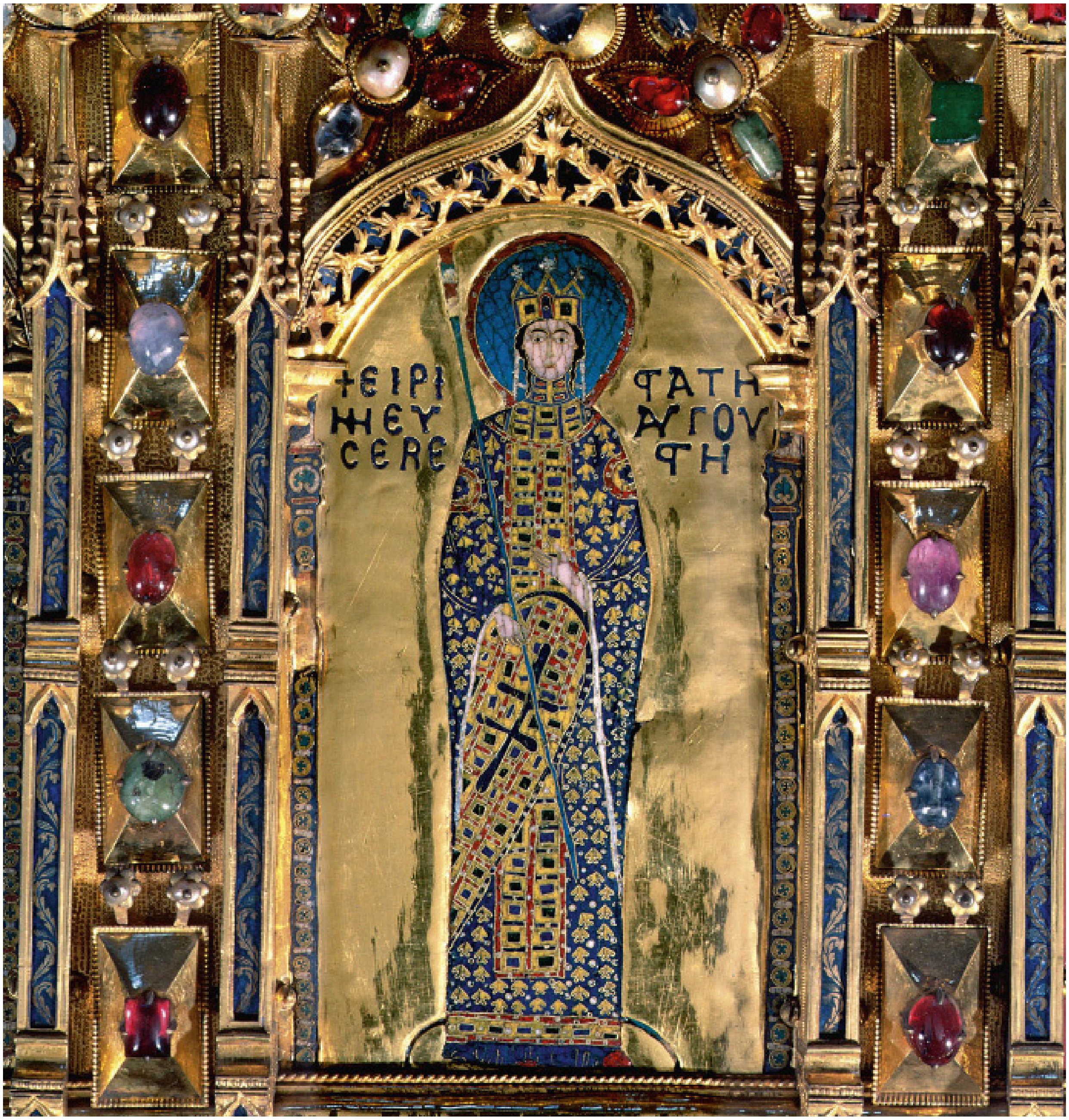
> Meanwhile the bishops and the clergy in the army debated and decided that the war was a righteous one, and that they certainly ought

> to attack the Greeks. For formerly the inhabitants of the city had been obedient to the law of Rome and now they were disobedient, since they said that the law of Rome was of no account, and called all who believed in it to be dogs. And the bishops said that for this reason one ought certainly to attack them, and that it was not a sin, but an act of great charity. Then it was announced to the entire host that all the Venetians and everyone else should go and hear the sermons on Sunday morning; and they did so. Then the bishops preached to the army, the bishop of Soissons, the bishop of Troyes, the bishop of Havestaist, master Jean Faicette and the abbot of Loos, and they showed to the pilgrims that the war was a righteous one; for the Greeks were traitors and murderers, and also disloyal, since they had murdered their rightful lord, and were worse than Jews. Moreover, the bishops said that, by the authority of God and in the name of the Pope, they would absolve all who attacked the Greeks. Then the bishops commanded the pilgrims to confess their sins and receive the communion devoutly; and said that they ought not to hesitate to attack the Greeks, for the latter were enemies of God. They also commanded that all the evil women should be sought out and sent away from the army to a distant place. This was done; the evil women were all put on a vessel and were sent very far away from the army.[7]

Who the evil women were is not known.

Villehardouin relates how the Looting Agreement originally struck between Doge Dandolo and the crusaders was further modified just before the assault:

> Much was advanced this way and that, but in the end, they devised that if God granted them entry into the city by force, all the booty taken was to be brought together, and fittingly distributed; and further, if the city fell into their power, six men should be taken from among the Franks, and six from among the Venetians, and these twelve should swear, on holy relics, to elect as emperor the man who, as they deemed, would rule with most profit to the land. And whosoever was thus elected emperor, would have one quarter of whatever was captured, whether within the city or without, and moreover would possess the palace of Bucoleon and that of Blachernæ; and the remaining three parts would be divided into two, and one of the halves awarded to the Venetians and the other to those of the host.[8]



Detail from an enamel on the Pala d'Oro altarpiece, St Mark's, Venice showing the Empress Irene. Made 976 AD in Constantinople and looted for Doge Pietro Orseolo.

After a furious 3 days of fighting the city fell and they unleashed a frenzy of carnage, vandalism and brutality. Nuns were dragged from convents before being raped, and neither bishops nor children spared. Fires were started throughout the city and the carnage went on until the men were too exhausted to continue.

After they had recovered, the systematic looting began with Santa Sofia, where a mob broke up the altar for its gold content, smashed the icons, seized the church vessels and crosses for their jewels and tore the mosaics and tapestries off the walls. Horses and mules were taken into the church and loaded up with gold and silver. Soldiers drank communion wine from gold chalices and ate the bread off patens while riding drunkenly around on the mules.

The Byzantine historian, Niketas Choniates, who was actually there, adds in his contemporary account of the looting of Santa Sofia:

> Nay more, a certain harlot, a sharer in their [the crusaders'] guilt, a minister of the furies, a servant of the demons, a worker of incantations and poisonings, insulting Christ, sat in the Patriarch's seat, singing an obscene song and dancing frequently. Nor, indeed, were these crimes committed and others left undone, on the ground that these were of lesser guilt, the others of greater. But with one consent all the most heinous sins and crimes were committed by all with equal zeal. Could those, who showed so great madness against God Himself, have spared the honourable matrons and maidens or virgins consecrated to God?

He gives a vivid description of the destruction and looting and goes on:

> Nothing was more difficult and laborious than to soften by prayers, to render benevolent, these wrathful barbarians, vomiting forth bile at every unpleasing word, so that nothing failed to inflame their fury. Whoever attempted it was derided as insane and a man of intemperate language. Often they drew their daggers against anyone who opposed them at all or hindered their demands.
>
> No one was without a share in the grief. In the alleys, in the streets, in the temples, complaints, weeping, lamentations, grief, the groaning of men, the shrieks of women, wounds, rape, captivity, the separation of those most closely united. Nobles wandered about ignominiously, those of venerable age in tears, the rich in poverty. Thus it was in the streets, on the corners, in the temple, in the dens, for no place remained unassailed or defended the suppliants. All places everywhere were filled full of all kinds of crime. Oh, immortal God, how great the afflictions of the men, how great the distress![9]

Robert of Clari continues his own account with:

> At the same time that this palace (Bucoleon) was surrendered to the Marquis Boniface of Montferrat, did the palace of Blachernæ surrender to Henry, the brother of Count Baldwin of Flanders, on condition that no hurt should be done to the bodies of those who were therein. There too was found much treasure, not less than in the palace

> of Bucoleon. Each garrisoned with his own people the castle that had been surrendered to him, and set a guard over the treasure. And the other people, spread abroad throughout the city, also gained much booty. The booty gained was so great that none could tell you the end of it: gold and silver, and vessels and precious stones, and samite, and cloth of silk, and robes vair and grey, and ermine, and every choicest thing found upon the earth. And well does Geoffrey of Villehardouin, the Marshal of Champagne, bear witness, that never, since the world was created, had so much booty been won in any city.[10]

There was considerable private looting and many soldiers were beheaded when caught. Even the tombs of the emperors were emptied. Items were distributed as per the agreement and flowed back steadily into the churches, cathedrals, convents, monasteries, towns and cities of Latin Europe. It is estimated that in coin alone the crusaders and the Venetians shared over 500,000 marks. When the head of St John the Baptist reached France, the largest French cathedral, Notre Dame in Amiens, was built around it. One hundred and fifty churches were emptied of tabernacles, pectoral and altar crosses, gold and silver crucifixes and objects, crosiers, chalices, icons and icon frames, patens, star covers and spears, gospels, epistle books, ladles, church plate, censers, votive lights, relics, antimins, candelabra, epitaphia, fans, reliquaries, vestments, banners, miniatures, processional, ivories, panagias, carvings, mosaics, altars and altar screens, manuscripts, thrones, tapestries, mitres, furniture and architectural fixtures and fittings. Cartloads of gold and silver and the precious metal iconostasis from Santa Sophia found their way into the Vatican. To completely empty the city took the next 60 years.

The Church sought the relics of saints and a brisk and macabre trade in these was established with the head of St Andrew being sent to Amalfi. The Bishop of Soissons secured a relic of St John and the head of St Stephen. St Clements’s remains, housed in the Church of St Theodosia, were removed to Cluny; St Marina went to St Albans, St James to Halbstadt. A gold and enamel reliquary encrusted with priceless jewels made its way to a convent in Steuben.

The True Cross, believed to be the cross on which Jesus had been crucified, was one of the greatest prizes and was divided between the barons and the Pope before pieces found their way to Santa Croce in Rome, Notre Dame in Paris, and the cathedrals of Pisa and Florence, where they remain.

So many wooden pieces were claimed as parts of the True Cross that Calvin observed that, if you put them together, you would have enough to fill a ship and yet only one man had carried it. However, the pieces in Constantinople had been collected by the Empress Helena (*c.* AD 250-*c.* 330), the mother of Constantine, who travelled the Holy Land doing good deeds and had had the cross revealed to her in a miracle. Recent microscopic analysis of the four pieces taken from Constantinople show that they are derived from a single olive tree. King Louis IX of France paid 10,000 silver marks for the 'true' Crown of Thorns and he built the Sainte Chapelle in Paris to house it.

Many famous artefacts were either destroyed or lost. Classical statues and monuments, which had survived since Ancient Greece or Imperial Rome were destroyed. Large bronzes such as Lysippus's 'Herakles' were melted down for the metal. A precious cloth on which Jesus's face had appeared after he wiped his face with it vanished. Several precious icons of Theotokos and her maphoron (head/shoulder scarf) disappeared along with the relics of St Luke, St Timothy and St John Chrysostom. The stone seat of St Mark was never seen again, and neither was the cloth with the relic of St Paul. The importance attached to these relics indicates the power of the Church over the medieval mind.

Doge Dandolo, had achieved the destruction of a rival and the greatest robbery in history, and the Venetians were the most discriminating looters. They knew the city better than the Franks because of their long and uneasy trading history. Following the massacres of foreigners in 1182 in Constantinople, the sizable Venetian population had been expelled by the ruling Angelus dynasty with the support of the Greek population.

The Venetians took an exquisite series of inlaid jewel and enamelled cameos from the Monastery of the Pantacrator to enhance the Palo D'Oro, the golden high altar retable used in the cathedral in Venice to cover the relics of St Mark. St Mark himself had been stolen from Alexandria in the ninth century. The porphyry statue of four tetrarchs, taken from a palace, still stands in a corner of St Mark's treasury. The Venetians also removed the icon of the Theotokos of Nikopeia, and a body part of St Stephen to reunite him with his feet, which were already in Venice. They added the golden tabernacle from the Church of the Holy Apostles, a reduced replica of the church.

Dandolo was clear that the four magnificent horses of the Hippodrome should survive and probably had their resting place on the Basilica of St Mark's already in mind. The horses, discussed at length in Chapter 1, remained in Venice until stolen by Napoleon in 1797 and can be seen today inside St Mark's. Dandolo in fact had to hide the horses in the Arsenal in Venice and they were still there at the time of his death in 1205. 50 years later a Doge, probably Enrico Zanieri, finally mounted them on the logia above the main door of St Mark's Cathedral to symbolise the strength of the Venetian maritime nation.

Venetians forcibly repatriated the best craftsmen to Venice, including woodcarvers, glass blowers, goldsmiths, silversmiths, jewellers, iconographers, enamellers and stonemasons. Venice became famous for its glass blowing due to the techniques of the Byzantines.

To this day, the treasury of St Mark's houses the most extensive assortment of Byzantine treasure in the world including over 30 chalices and various altar pieces, gospels, jewels, vestments, reliquaries, manuscripts and church plate. Amongst other treasures the collection includes the Veroli casket, the most precious Byzantine carved ivory, and the Psalter of Emperor Basil.

Dandolo sent home shiploads of the many building components that have gone into creating the texture of the city which today is Venice. In addition, he claimed three-eighths of the Byzantine Empire for Rome and all the Greek islands, which remained Venetian for four centuries. The Greek language was forbidden in churches, all their Orthodox priests being forced to submit to Latin prelates.

The sack of Constantinople hastened the decline of Byzantium and drove a chasm between the Catholic West and the Orthodox East. Almost none of the crusaders reached the Holy Land and the appetite of Western Europe for large-scale crusading was lost. A weakened Byzantium became easy prey for the Turks and so allowed for an Islamic victory. Constantinople was by far the most powerful and richest city of its time. The equivalent today would be a foreign invader destroying London or New York, killing many of its inhabitants, and taking all its wealth and art.

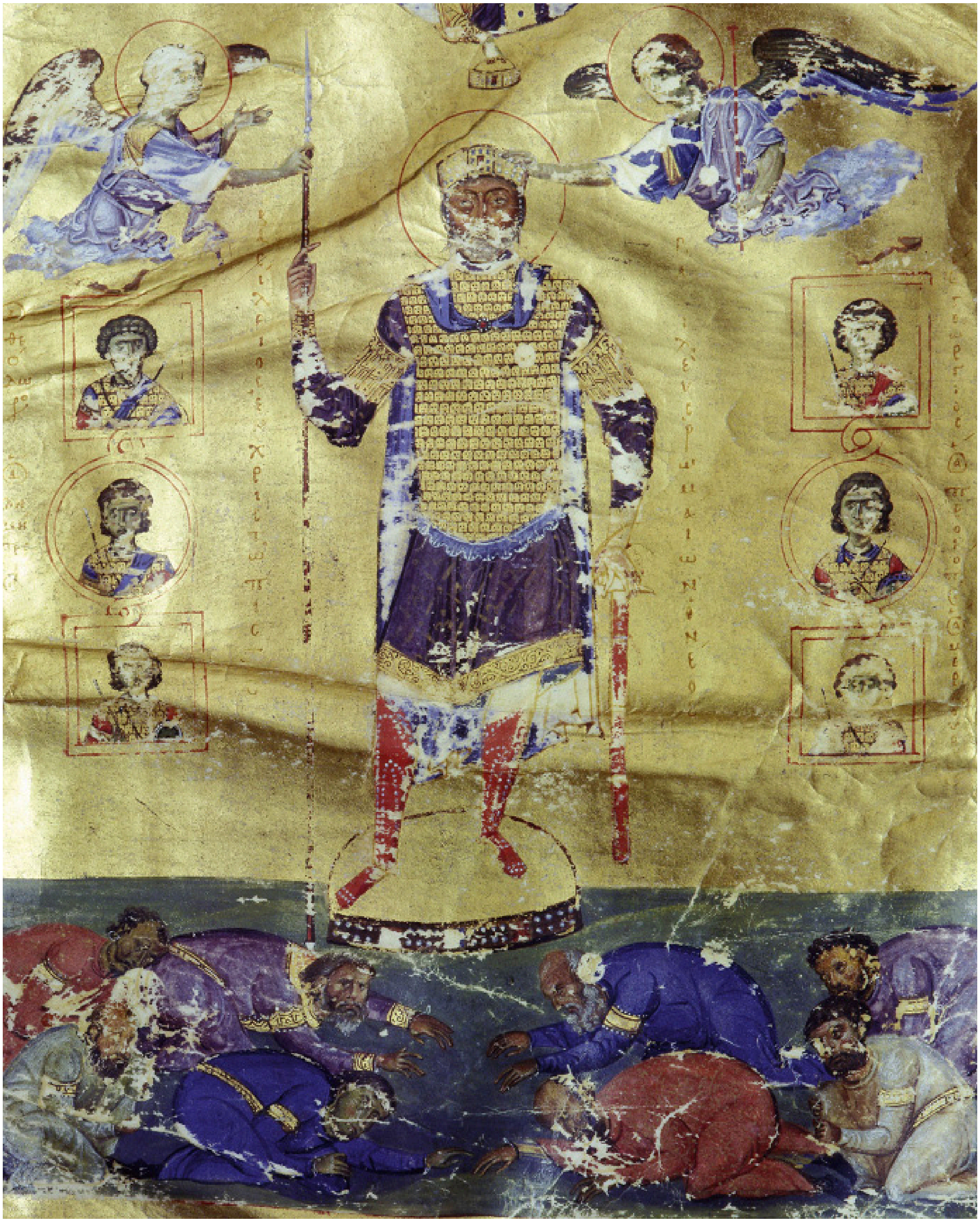
Horses of St Mark's: bronzes were removed to Venice during the sack of Constantinople in 1204 then looted by Napoleon in 1797.

Doge Dandolo came up with the plan of sacking Constantinople and implemented it, carting off half of its treasure and annexing three-eighths of its territory. He accompanied the expedition in person, although 90 years of age, and supervised the looting. He knew the city well because he had earlier accompanied the disastrous expedition against Constantinople led by Doge Vitale Michiel in 1171. He was later Bailus (Regent) in Constantinople and sought unsuccessfully to resolve diplomatic issues between the two states. Renewed negotiations in 1186 led to a treaty, but left the Doge with a deep hatred for the Byzantines. Having been blind for at least 10 years he couldn't see anything of the treasure, but he had a thorough knowledge of it from his time in the city.

Dandolo's final insult to Hagia Sofia was to insist on being buried there. A plaque in the church on the probable spot dates from an Italian nineteenth-century restoration team. The real tomb was destroyed by the Turks after their conquest of Constantinople in 1453 when they turned the church into a mosque. Dandolo is a contender for the greatest art thief of all time, but he has some strong competition, as we shall see later.

Even in the modern era, the Orthodox Church has never forgiven the Western Church for this event, and 800 years later Pope John Paul II twice expressed sorrow for the terrible Fourth Crusade. In 2001, he wrote to Christodoulos, Archbishop of Athens, saying, 'It is tragic that the assailants, who set out to secure free access for Christians to the Holy Land, turned against their brothers in the faith. The fact that they were Latin Christians fills Catholics with deep regret'. In 2004, while Bartholomew I, Patriarch of Constantinople, was paying a visit to the Vatican, John Paul II asked, 'How can we not share, at a distance of eight centuries, the pain and disgust?' Also In April 2004, in a speech on the 800th anniversary of the city's capture, Bartholomew I formally accepted the apology. 'The spirit of reconciliation is stronger than hatred,' he said during a liturgy attended by Roman Catholic Archbishop Philippe Barbarin of Lyon, France. 'We receive with gratitude and respect your cordial gesture for the tragic events of the Fourth Crusade. It is a fact that a crime was committed here in the city 800 years ago.'

Today, the Orthodox Church, still provides spiritual leadership to over 300 million Christians, but far from rivalling the Vatican in the fourth century, it hangs on to a small besieged enclave in a decaying corner of Istanbul called the Phanar or lighthouse. Many of its schools have closed and the Turkish government has seized most of its property. Fundamentalist Muslims demonstrate daily outside the Patriarchate and the Ecumenical Patriarch, Bartholomew I, is often jeered and taunted. Government bureaucrats harass him, blocking his efforts to repair his buildings, and his effigy is burned by Muslim fanatics. Turkey insists the new Patriarch should be a Turkish citizen despite the fact there are only 2500 Orthodox Christians remaining in Turkey, and its attitude towards the Church is impeding its membership of the European Union.



Psalter of St Basil - Emperor Basil II, miniature from a Psalter page, Greek manuscript, 10th century AD.

[1] Choniates, Niketas, *Atexii Ducae Imperium,* ch iiiv, quoted in *The Fourth Crusade, Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources in European History,* Dana Carlton Munroe, ed. & tr., Vol. III, no. 1, University of Pennsylvania, 1907.

[2] Fulcher of Chartres, *The Siege of the City of Jerusalem, Gesta Francorum Jerusalem Expugnantium.*

[3] Medieval Sourcebook: *Gesta Francorum.*

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Gibb, H. A. R., *The Damascus Chronicle of the Crusades:* Extracted and translated from the Chronicle of Ibn Al-Qualanisi, Dover Publications, 2003.

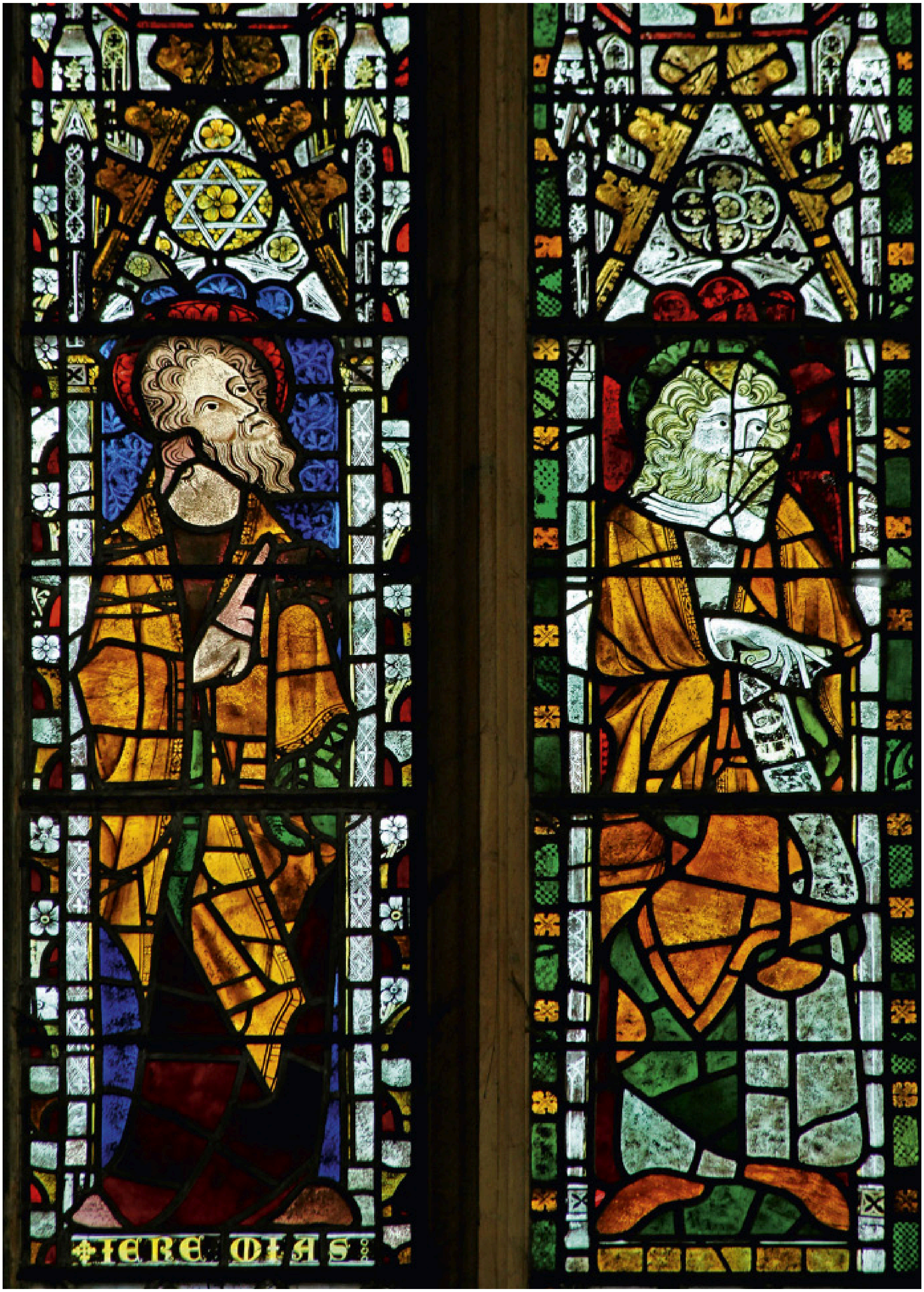
[7] de Clari, Robert, *Chroniques,* ch. lxxii-lxxiii, p. 5758, Old French, quoted in *The Fourth Crusade, Translations and Reprints from the original sources in European History,* Dana Carlton Munroe, ed. & tr., Vol. III, no. 1, University of Pennsylvania, 1907, p 13-14.

[8] de Villehardouin, Geoffrey and de Joinville, Jean, *Memoirs of the Crusades,* Frank Marzials, tr. and ed., Everyman's Library, London, 1908, p 58-66.

[9] Choniates, Niketas, *Atexii Ducae Imperium,* ch iiiv, *op. cit.*

[10] de Clari, *op. cit.,* p. 5758.

3 - The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Renaissance and the dissolution of the monasteries


IERE MIAS

Window depicting Jeremiah and a prophet. Outstanding example of medieval stained glass in Tewkesbury Abbey.

> A great nombre of them whych purchased those supertycyous mansyons, resrved of those lybrarye bokes, some to serve theyr jakes, some to scoure candelstyckes, and some to rubbe their bootes. Some they solde to the grossers and soapsellers.
>
> - John Bale, 1549, on the destruction of the monastic libraries.[1]

In the fourteenth century, Europe slid backwards due to two natural disasters, the Little Ice Age and the Black Death. European human existence was turned into survival; looting, which requires someone to have objects worth stealing, faded out of human behaviour for 100 years.

The Baltic Sea froze over in 1303, 1306 and 1307 for the first time in recorded history, alpine glaciers advanced and Greenland and Iceland were abandoned. Heavy rains and cold temperatures caused crops to fail in France in 1315 and there were widespread epidemics and famine. The colder weather may have been accelerated by the Black Death as the sharp rise in carbon dioxide due to deforestation between ad 1200 and 1300 was reversed after 1350 as cultivated fields were abandoned.

The Black Death, or Bubonic Plague, arrived in October 1347 when Genoese trading ships arrived at Messina in Sicily with dead and dying men at the oars. Rumours of a terrible plague spreading from China through the Middle East had reached Europe in 1346. The disease, spread by contact, normally killed its victims within 5 days of infection but there were many cases where a person was healthy one night and dead in the morning. The mortality rate was erratic but ranged from 20% to 100% of the population - around 20 million people. Contemporary writers claim that a third of the world's population perished, but this is probably borrowed from St John's figure for mortality during the Plague taken from the book of Revelations, a popular guide to medieval human affairs in desperate times.

Mass burial pits overflowed and Paris lost half its population of 50,000. London and the other major cities of Europe were equally badly devastated. Pope Clement VI granted remission of sins to all those who died because there were so many unattended by priests. There were six more waves of the Plague between 1350 and 1400 that killed half the European population. France sank into the Hundred Years War (1337-1450) and suffered the defeats of Crécy (1346) and Agincourt (1416).

The Church offered no guidance or comfort as it had become corrupt, and infighting moved the Papacy to Avignon in 1309 and back to Rome in

1377. The corruption of the Papal Court was legendary and the priestly vows of celibacy and poverty were ignored, causing the first stirrings of the Protestant reformation. The Plague survivors, inheriting the goods of the deceased, lapsed into self-indulgence as wages increased due to labour shortages. Fanaticism and hysteria became common and people looked for scapegoats, often picking on Jews or witches.

Out of this dark period a cultural movement emerged in Florence in the fourteenth century, coined the Renaissance or Rebirth by the Italian artist and critic Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574). The devastation wrought by the Black Death brought European thinking more into the present and away from the after-life and spirituality. It also created a wave of piety which led to the sponsorship of works of art. This influence covered philosophy, art, politics, science and religion and slowly spread around Europe.

Italy existed as a series of competing smaller city states that included Naples, Milan, Florence, the Papal States and Venice. Each city state had a ruling family such as the Pope in Rome, the Medici in Florence, the Sforza in Milan and the Este in Ferrara, except Venice with an elected Doge. These families competed as rivals for the best artists, and commissioned works from them. At different times, the Medici, the richest family in Europe at the time, commissioned Donatello, Fra Angelico, Michelangelo, Leonardo and Raphael.

As interest in art was rekindled, looting became popular again. Although occasional institutionalised looting was sanctioned at a national level, it was more often conducted on a regional and opportunistic basis. However, the French kings Louis XII and Charles VIII sanctioned looting on a state-sponsored level during their wars in Italy and pioneered attempts at legalising looting by adding clauses into treaties with the vanquished specifying the transfer of ownership of paintings, statues, manuscripts and tapestries. When challenged on a looting issue, a victor could hide behind a treaty, conveniently forgetting it had been forced onto a defeated party and signed under duress. This tactic has gained in popularity ever since and was used extensively by Napoleon and Hitler.

The rise of Cardinal Rodrigo de Lanzol y Borja to the papacy in 1492 as Alexander VI signalled the arrival of the House of Borgia into Italian politics and ushered in 15 years of destruction and looting, unrivalled in Renaissance Italy.

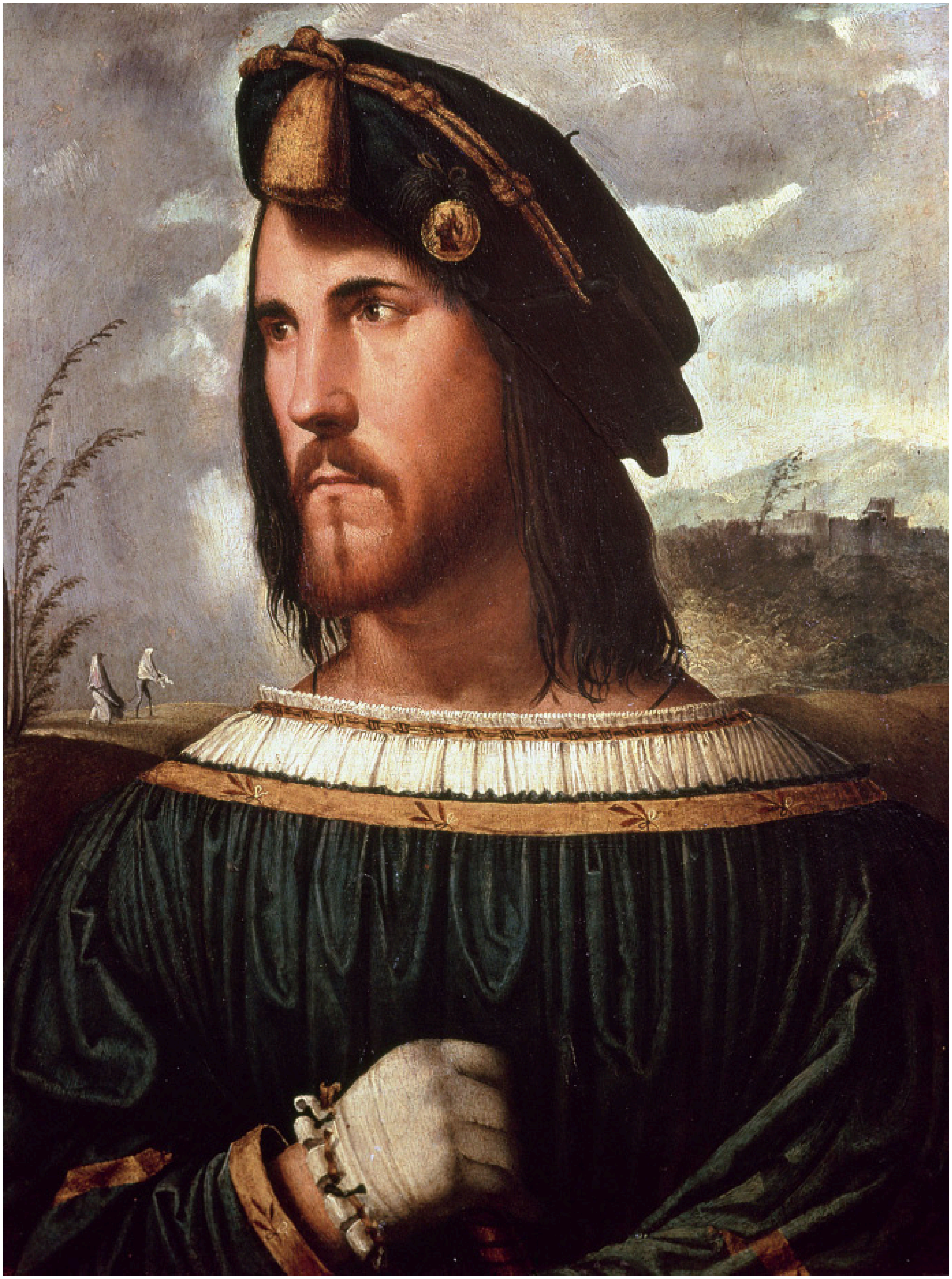
Palazzo Ducale (12th-15th century), Urbino, Italy.

Alexander's son, Cesare was born in 1475 to Alexander's lover, Vannozza de Catteanei. Cesare Borgia was groomed by his father from an early age and became a cardinal at 19. After Borgia's brother Giovanni was murdered, possibly by Borgia himself, Borgia resigned from the cardinalate and took over as commander of the Papal armies. With his father's encouragement, Borgia set out to carve himself a state in Northern Italy. He sacked and looted Imola, Forli, Rimini, Faenza, Piombino, Capua, Urbino and Camerino, killing anyone who was a threat. His behaviour mimicked but surpassed his father who had already established a similar reputation for himself in Rome. John Farrow writes on Alexander VI:

> Alexander continued his vicious ways. The pursuit of sensual pleasures and the enrichment of his family seemed to be his main occupation. With shocking regularity treasures, revenues, and hereditary properties were looted from the church to aggrandize the House of Borgia and the most obscure members of that clan were certain of wealth and security if they came to Rome. It was an

> opportunity seldom neglected and as one writer put it: ‘Not ten papacies would suffice to support this swarm of cousins’.[2]

Borgia sacked Urbino and the famous Ducal Palace, which had been built in 1454 by the Condottieri, Duke Federico da Montefeltro. The Palace, designed by Luciano Laurana and constructed out of imported Dalmatian marble, is one the finest constructions of Renaissance Italy. Although Montefeltro made his fortune as a mercenary and had started fighting at the age of 16, he loved architecture and the arts and filled his palace with scholars and artists. He was awarded all the titles and awards of his day, including the English Order of the Garter and he never lost a war. His library was the second largest in Italy after the Vatican and he sponsored artists, including the young Raphael.

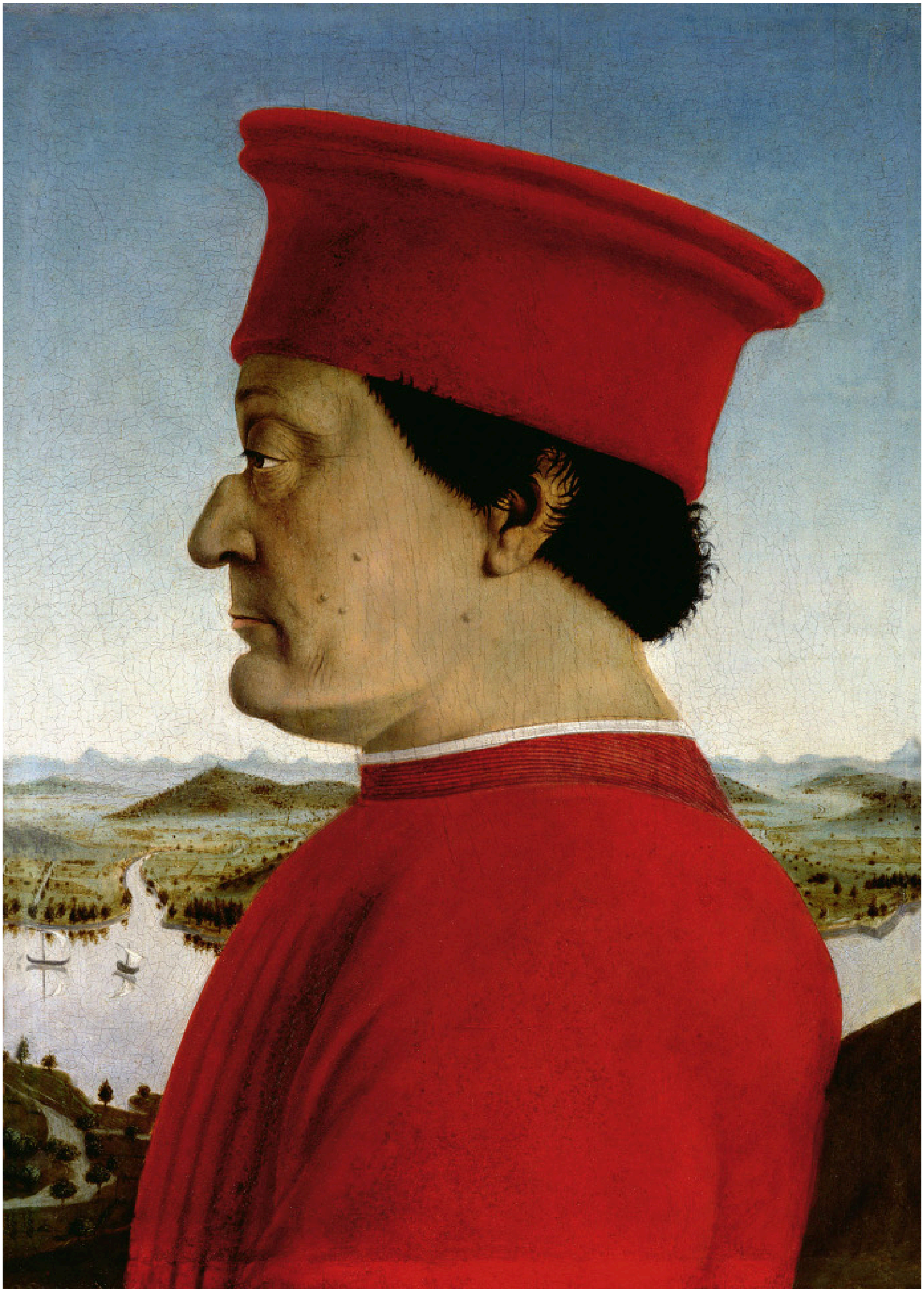


Cesare Borgia (1475-1507) Duke of Valencia by Altobello Melone (1497-1530)

Shortly before it was captured by Borgia from Federico’s son Guidobaldo da Montefeltro (author of *The Courtier*), wrote about the palace:

> In the opinion of many it is the fairest to be found in Italy; and the Duke filled it so well with all things fitting its magnificence that it seemed less like a palace than a city. Not only did he collect articles of common use, vessels of silver, the trappings for chambers of rare cloths of gold and silk, and such-like furniture, but he added multitudes of bronze and marble statues, exquisite pictures, and instruments of music of all sorts. There was nothing but was of the finest and most excellent quality to be seen there. Moreover, he gathered together at a vast cost a large number of the best and rarest books in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, all of which he adorned with gold and silver, esteeming them the chiefest treasure of his spacious palace.[3]

When Cesare Borgia entered Urbino as conqueror in 1502, it is estimated he carried off loot to the value of 150,000 ducats. Borgia kept most of the art except for the famous collection of statuary which had been requested by Isabella d’Este, and he sent this to her for her palace in Mantua. Isabella d’Este, married to Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua, was known in her day as *La Prima Donna*, and was the most powerful woman in Italy. As ruthless and ambitious as Borgia, she treated him as an equal and the two of them enjoyed a respectful friendship. Although an avid collector of coins, her main love was for Roman sculpture and modern copies of antique statuary. Despite Guidobaldo da Montefeltro of Urbino being married to Isabella’s sister-in-law and good friend Elisabetta Gonzaga, Isabella had no qualms about requesting the statuary from Borgia.



Federigo da Montefeltro (1422-82) Duke of Urbino, c.1465, by Piero della Francesca, (c. 1415-1492).

The Renaissance greatly affected contemporary theology and the Church was weakened by the emphasis on rationality and logic over spirituality. Many of the period's leading thinkers became humanists including John Calvin, Martin Luther, Erasmus and Thomas More. The corrupt Alexander VI, who was accused of nepotism towards Cesare Borgia, simony, and the fathering of four children whilst Pope, added to the Church's decline of standards.

Erasmus and Luther proposed reform to the Church, based on a humanist understanding of the New Testament. Luther published the *95 Theses* in October 1517, which challenged Papal authority and criticised its corruption. The *95 Theses* led to the Reformation and a break with the Catholic Church for much of Northern Europe. In 1521 Luther went further with *De votis monasticis* ('on the monastic vows'), a treatise that declared the monastic way of life pointless, immoral, without scriptural precedent and incompatible with true Christianity. A special meeting with the German members of the Augustinian Friars followed at which all but one of the monks from Luther's home monastery in Wittenberg resigned their vows and got married.

News spread rapidly through the courts of Northern Europe and several Protestant-leaning and acquisitive monarchs saw the opportunity to seize the vast wealth and land holdings from the monastic orders. In Sweden in 1527 King Gustavus Vasa started a cascade of monastic destruction and looting by securing an edict of the Diet allowing him to confiscate any monastic property he wanted to increase the royal income. Any donated property had to be returned to the families of the donors. Gustav gained huge estates from the Swedish monasteries and convents and by 1580 they had ceased to exist.

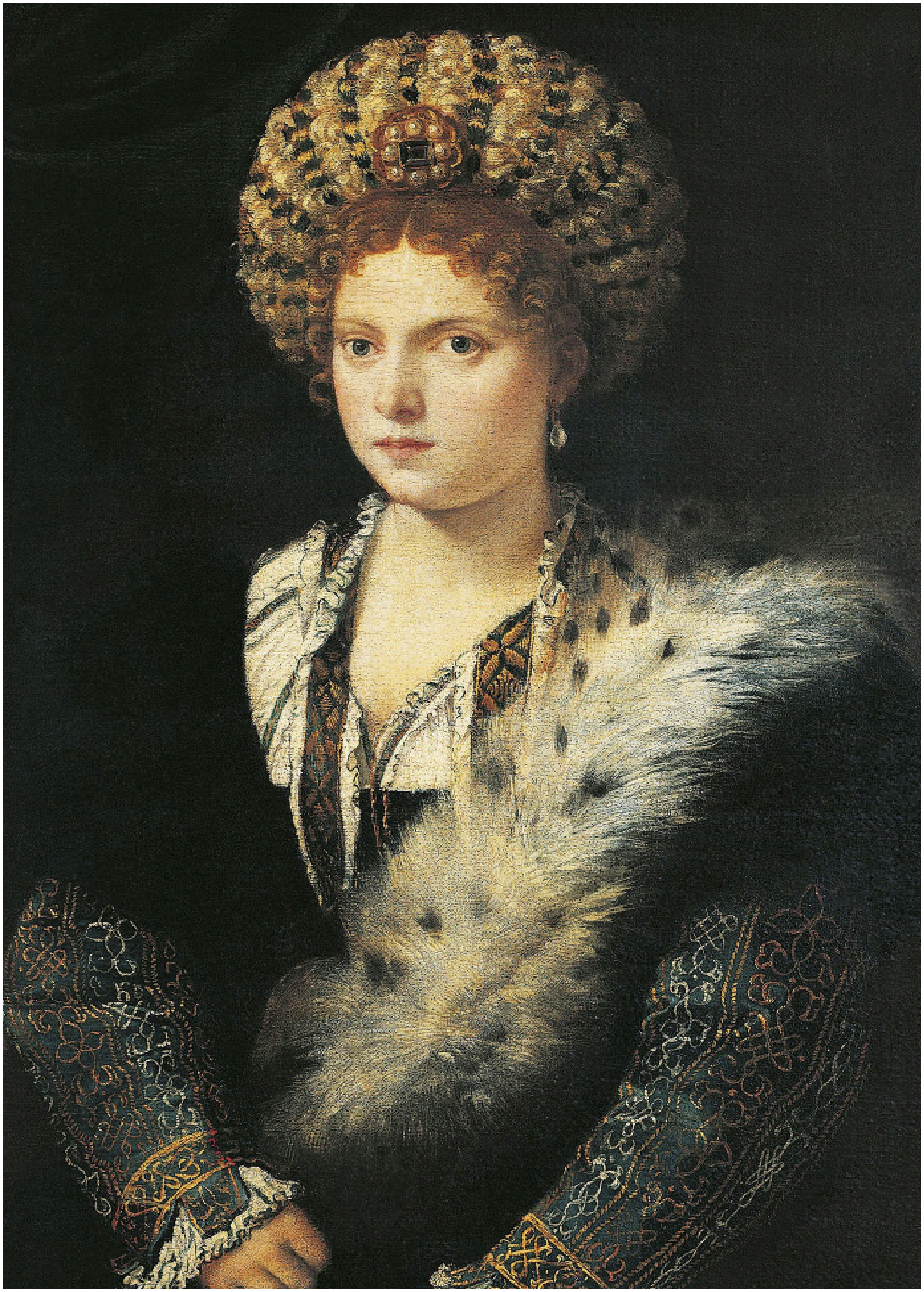
In 1528, King Frederick of Denmark followed suit, seizing the 15 richest monasteries in Denmark and passed further laws in the 1530s banning friars and forcing nuns and monks to give all their houses and properties to the crown. In 1523 in Switzerland, the city state of Zurich forced nuns to leave their convents and marry, and the following year dissolved all their monasteries under the pretext of giving the income to the poor and funding education. Basel followed in 1529 and Geneva in 1530, but the former monks and nuns were offered help with learning a new trade.

In England, Thomas Cromwell, about to become Henry VIII's chief minister, watched carefully. He had promised to make the King wealthier than any previous monarch and was now presented with the perfect means to achieve this. When Henry wanted to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn, he applied to the Pope to annul the marriage. When the Pope refused in 1531, Henry declared himself Supreme Head of the Church of England. In the same year he passed the Act in Restraint of Appeals, which ended the right of clergy to appeal to Rome over the King's head in financial or spiritual disputes. Those who refused to comply with the Royal Supremacy were tried for treason and beheaded.

At this time the abbeys and monasteries of England, Wales and Ireland were among the largest landowners in the country and Henry desperately needed cash. Their treasuries contained gold, silver and countless religious artefacts inlaid with precious stones. The monastic libraries attracted scholars from around the world. Worcester Priory had 600 books and the Augustinian Friars at York 646. Many of these were ancient illuminated manuscripts with bindings made of precious metals and jewels. Monastic institutions owned over two million acres, nearly 20% of the English landmass.

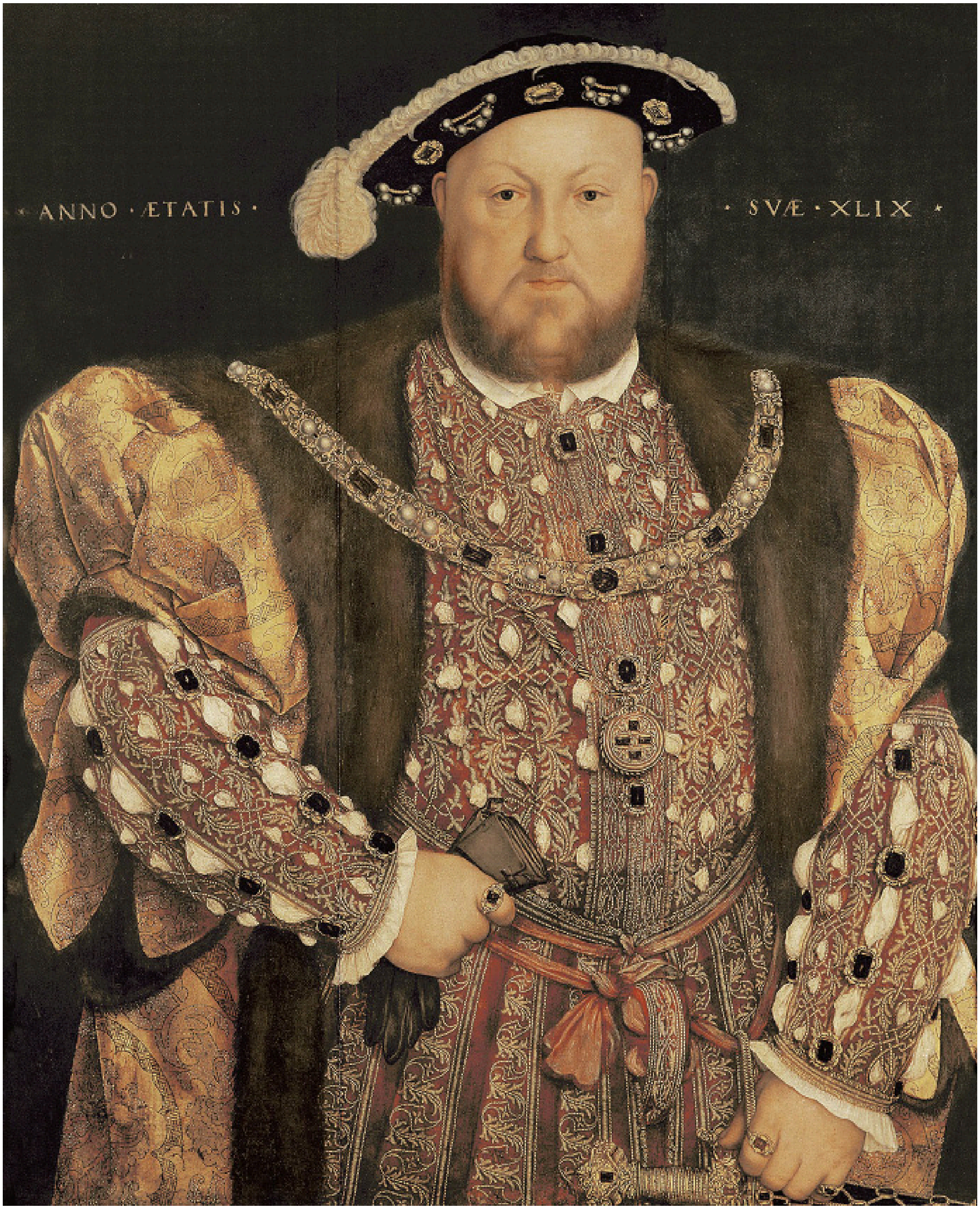
Under the authority endowed to him from his own Act of Supremacy, endorsed in various versions by parliament in 1534, 1536 and 1539, Henry disbanded the monasteries and confiscated their land, artworks and books between 1536 and 1541. In 1534 he sent his first minister, Thomas Cromwell, to visit all the monasteries, abbeys, priories and convents, ostensibly to ensure a thorough understanding that their allegiance was to Henry now as opposed to the Pope. In fact, the 'visitation of the monasteries', as it became known, was a cover for Cromwell to inventory the extensive holdings of these institutions. The task was so vast that Cromwell soon delegated the work to a commission of laymen including Richard Pollard, Richard Layton and Thomas Moyle.

Meanwhile, Cromwell instructed his network to instigate an extensive public relations campaign that alleged that nuns and monks in monasteries were sorcerers, idle, living in luxury, living off the people and giving nothing back and that, if the wealth were transferred to the king, it would allow him to abolish taxation. The landed gentry and aristocracy immediately saw the potential for them to end up with some of the spoils and were supportive.



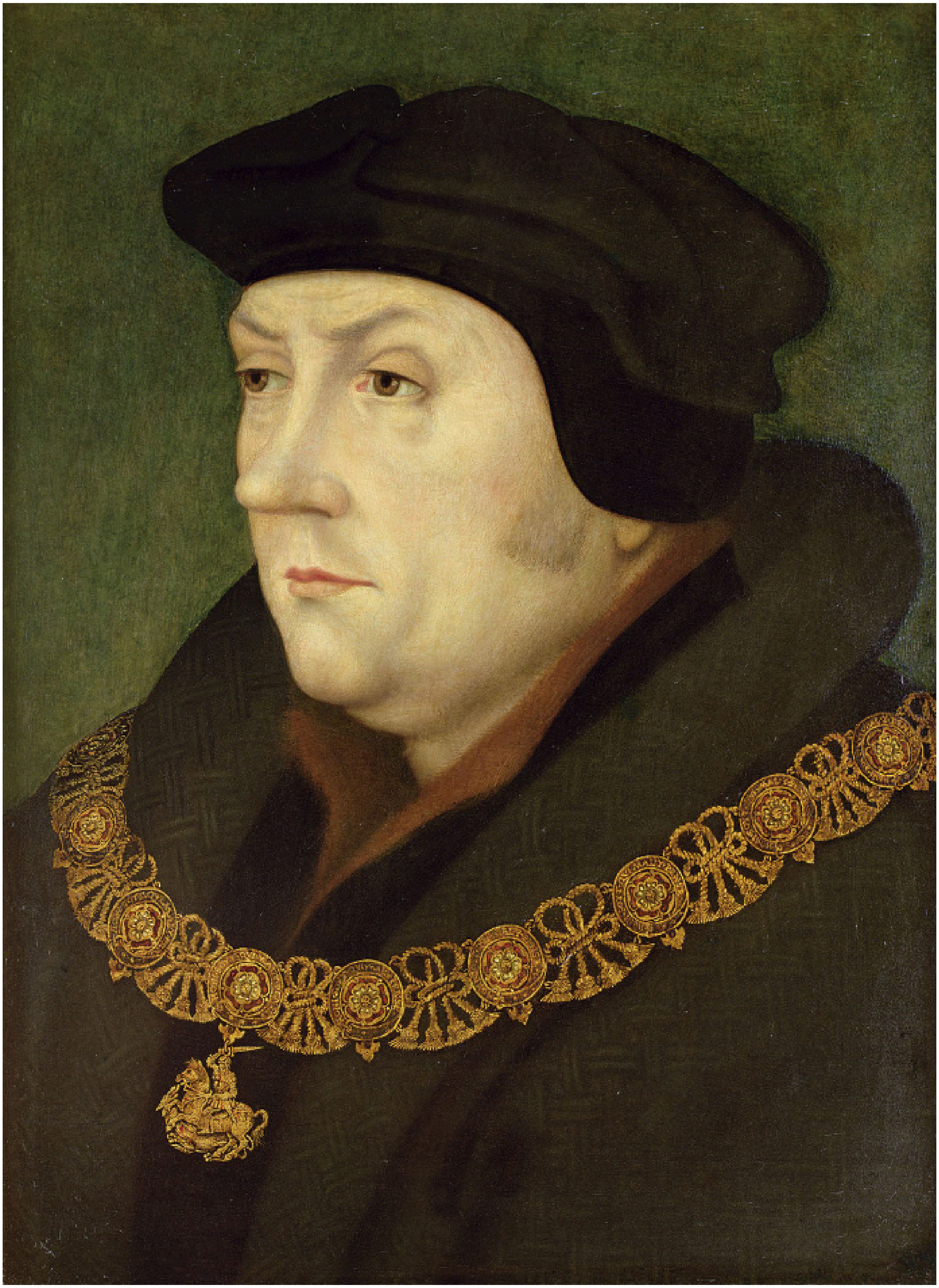
Isabella d'Este **(1474-1539) by Titian (c. 1534-36).**

In 1536 the Suppression Act instigated the first act in the ‘dissolution of the monasteries’, whereby the Crown took over the assets of 70% of the smaller religious houses in Wales and England with revenues of under £200 a year. To counter considerable opposition from pro-papal conservatives under the leadership of Reginald Pole, Cromwell was forced to offer bribes that allowed the monks to leave voluntarily with a pension for life. Such persuasion proved effective and usually included a larger sum for the abbot or abbess for overseeing and encouraging the transition. Monks and nuns were then given the option of secularisation or transfer to one of the new religious houses being formed by Henry. Henry offered Pole the position of Archbishop of York or Bishop of Winchester if he would support his divorce from Catherine of Aragon, but Pole declined and was driven into exile in France and Italy, where he continued a life of study in Paris and Padua.



***Henry VIII* (1491-1547) aged 49, 1540 (oil on panel) by Holbein the Younger.**

Government lawyers established a key legal principle that the superior of a religious house (abbot, abbess, prior or prioress) was the owner of the monastic property. If they were then found guilty of treason, all the property legally reverted to the Crown. This encouraged a flood of voluntary abandonment as the alternative could be treason and beheading. The pensions that were offered were more generous to those who volunteered, which meant abbots and priors came under increasing pressure from their communities to comply. For resisting, the Abbots of Reading, Glastonbury and Colchester were hung, drawn and quartered. St Benet's Abbey in Norfolk was the only abbey in England that managed to avoid dissolution, as the Bishop of Norwich managed to arrange for its transfer to his control.



***Thomas Cromwell*, unknown artist, school of Hans Holbein.**

The loot flowed in and Cromwell established a new government agency to manage it, the Court of Augmentations. The wealth was not only in the land, books and artworks but also in the fabric of the buildings, many of which were burned down as this was the easiest way to extract the lead from the roofs, gutters and plumbing. To ensure everything fell into the net, Henry established a Commission for the Destruction of Shrines to destroy all the shrines and confiscate their considerable treasures. When the shrine of St Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral was destroyed in 1538, it required 26 wagons to carry off the loot. The lucrative pilgrimage trade collapsed, along with its associated memorabilia and hospitality business.

Under the Court of Augmentations, Cromwell set up local commissioners to run the auctions that took place at the dissolutions. While the majority of precious items and books were reserved for the Crown, the building stone, timber, lead, and slate roofs were auctioned off to the highest bidder. Many monastic outbuildings were turned into stables, barns and granaries. Wealthy parishes bought churches, pews and stained-glass windows. Bronze, silver and gold artefacts, except where considered important, were melted down. Relics for which kings and dukes had paid a fortune in Constantinople after its destruction during the Fourth Crusade were smashed or burnt. Great abbeys, such as Walsingham, Bury St Edmunds, Glastonbury and Shaftesbury, were left in ruins or destroyed completely.

Henry became richer by £150,000 a year. Cromwell had intended this income to support the government, but after his fall from grace in 1540, Henry took this income to fund his military ambitions in Scotland and France. This amount proved insufficient, so Henry started selling off monastic property, usually for a market rate of 20 years' income, raising over £1.4m by 1547. Most of the buyers were leading local gentry and aristocracy and many survive in the same ownership up to the current day. Bolton Abbey still belongs to the Duke of Devonshire and Woburn Abbey to the Duke of Bedford. There are many other examples of stately homes on the sites of monasteries such as Rufford Abbey and Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire, Calke Abbey in Derbyshire, Forde Abbey in Dorset and Broughton House in Northamptonshire.

Henry VIII couldn't accommodate everything in his palaces and so he sold the excess. After he had filled the royal libraries of Westminster, Greenwich and Hampton Court with the theological and historical books that interested him, and the most precious of the ancient manuscripts, a brisk trade developed in unwanted volumes.

Henry took a close personal interest in the accumulating loot and the final destination of the most valuable objects. The 1542 inventory of Henry's main library at Westminster survives and lists over 100 manuscripts as having monastic provenance. Henry conferred on his library keeper, John Leland, the title of Royal Antiquary and commissioned him to search the entire country for items of outstanding interest from the libraries, cathedrals, priories, abbeys, churches and colleges.

Leland spent 6 years, from 1540 to 1546, travelling through England and Wales on the project. He delivered his findings in a 'New Years Gift' to the King, published by John Bale in 1549 in which he wrote:

> I have so traviled yn your dominions booth by the se costes and the midle partes, sparing nother labor nor costes, by the space of these vi. yeres paste, that there is almoste nother cape, nor bay, haven, creke or peers, river or confluence of rivers, breches, watchies, lakes, meres, fenny waters, montagnes, valleis, mores, hethes, forestes, chases wooddes, cities, burges, castelles, principale manor placis, monasteries, and colleges, but I have seene them; and notid yn so doing a hole worlde of thinges very memorable.

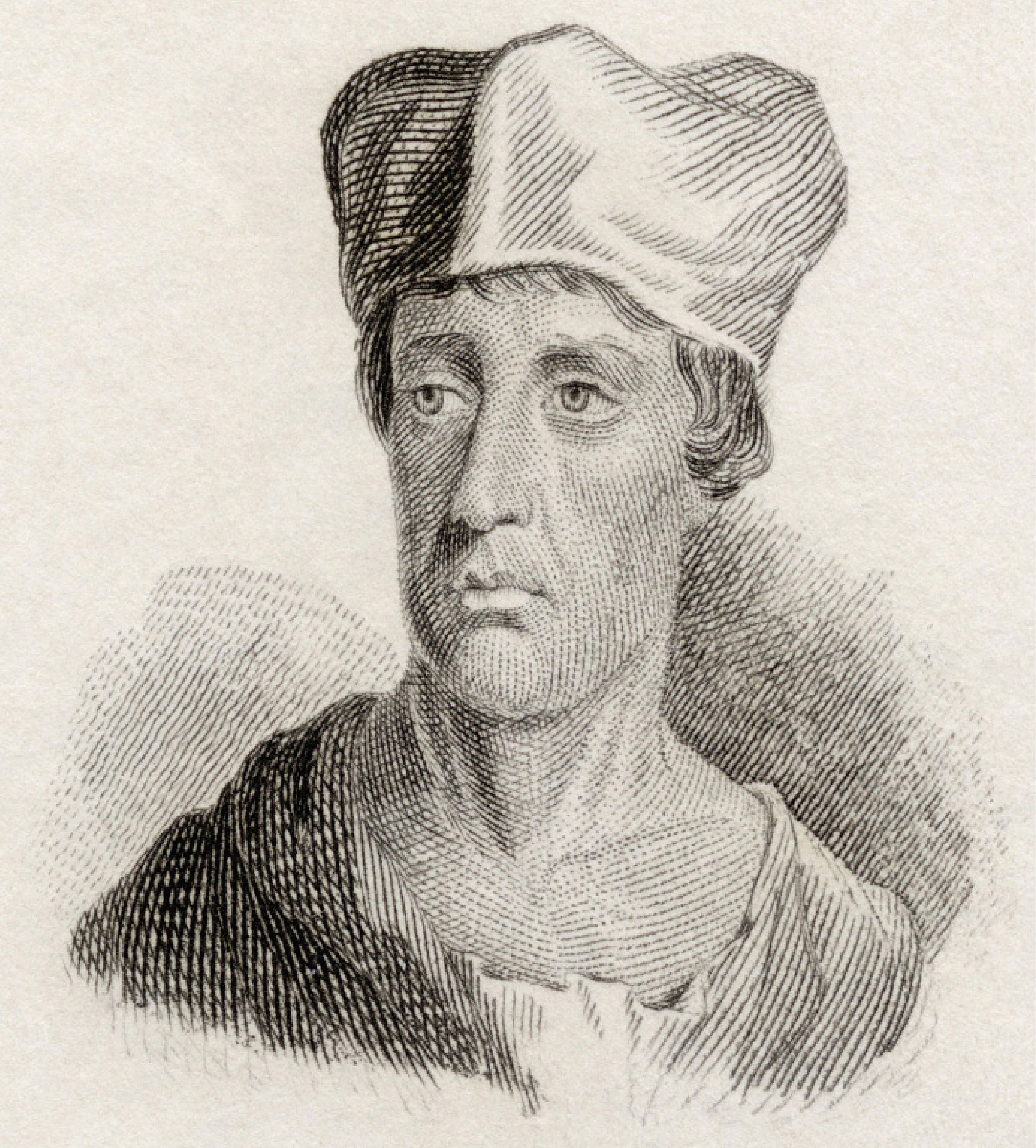
This comprehensive work runs to five volumes in the 1905 edition.

Leland worked closely with Cromwell, ensuring the finest books and manuscripts made their way to the royal libraries, after which Henry allowed him to retire and presented him with the valuable rectory of Hasely in Oxfordshire. Leland undoubtedly saved many works and in *The Laboryouse Journey* he claims to have:

> conserved many good authors, the whych otherwyse had ben lyke to have peryshed, to no small commodyte of good letters. Of the which parte remayne in the most magnificent libraryes of your royall palaces. Part also remayne in my custodie, wherby I trust right shortly, so to describe your moste noble realme, and to publyshe the Maiestie of the excellente actes of your progenytours, hytherto sore obscured, bothe for lacke of empryntynge of such workes as laye secretely in corners.[4]

Leland then tried to create a further elaborate history, but lost his wits and was certified insane in March 1550. His own extensive writings and collections of manuscripts are housed today in the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

Buyers from overseas with particular interest in the books and manuscripts arrived from Germany, France and Italy. John Leland bewailed the foreign appropriation of monastic books, complaining to Cromwell that ‘The Germanes perceiving our deridiousness and negligence, do send dayly young Scholars hither, that spoileth them [the books], and cutteth them out of Libraries, returning home and putting them abroad as Monuments of their own Country.’[5])



John Leland (*c.* 1503-1552), from 'Crabbes Historical Dictionary', (1825)

John Bale, the theologian, writer and collector who built his collection of 150 volumes after the dissolution had personally examined many of the libraries of the Augustinian and Carmelite houses before the dissolution under the instruction of Cromwell. Bale's most important work is *Illustrium majoris Britanniae scriptorum, hoc est, Angliae, Cambriae, ac Scotiae Summarium...* (A Summary of the Famous Writers of Great Britain, that is, of England, Wales and Scotland) (1), which contained authors from the previous five centuries.

Bale's notebook is a valuable resource for the period and is preserved in the Selden Collection of the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Bale noted: 'I have bene also at Norwyche, our second citye of name, and there all the library monuments are turned to the use of their grossers, candelmakers, sopesellers, and other worldly occupyers... As much have I saved there and in certen other places in Northfolke and Southfolke concerning the authors names and titles of their workes, as I could, and as much wold I have done through out the whole realm, if I had been able to have borne the charges, as I am not'. Considering Bale is always complaining of being broke, it is unclear how much of his collection he bought and how much he misappropriated.

Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1559 until his death in 1575, was another passionate collector of books who benefited from the dissolution. Parker's outstanding collection of manuscripts, largely collected from former monastic libraries, included the book of *St Augustine Gospels* and Version A of the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*, housed with the rest of his collection in the Parker Library at Corpus Christi College in Cambridge.

In 1560 Parker wrote to Bale inquiring if he had any 'bokes of Antiquitie, not printed'.[6]) Unfortunately, Bale revealed that 'havock' had been made of his own library when he had been forced to flee from Ireland into exile on the continent and he had been, 'depyved of all that I had, by the papystes under queune marye'. Bale reported that he was, 'Collecting his books in tyme of the lamentable spoyle of the lybraryes of Englande' and that he amassed his library 'through muche fryndeshypp, labour, and expenses', and it included books he had recovered 'in stacyoners and boke bynders store howses, some in grosers, sopesellars, taylers, and other occupyers shoppes, some in shyppes ready to be carryed over sea into Flaunders to be solde - for in those uncircumspect and carelesse dayes, there was no quyckar merchaundyce than lybrary bokes.'[7]

Rievaulx Abbey, Yorkshire. Founded in 1132 and dissolved by Henry VIII in 1538.

The breakdown of the monastic system by royal demand alone was only possible because of the irresistible bait of personal enrichment for the aristocracy and gentry from looting and the knockdown prices of monastic property and land. The peasantry was also supportive because the destruction of the monasteries provided employment in trade and demolition. Initially demolitions were completed and foundations were undermined with props that were set on fire. However, this proved so expensive that partial destructions became the usual practice, leaving the ruins that still litter the English landscape today and provided the inspiration for the eighteenth-century Romantic Movement during which the landscape architect Capability Brown (1716-1783) remodelled the ruins of Fountains Abbey and Roche Abbey in Yorkshire.

After the king’s men had taken their fill, the surrounding population joined in. At Bolton Abbey in Yorkshire, after the lead roofs of the priory had been removed in 1539, the local population removed much of the stone for re-use and it can still be seen today in buildings up and down the Wharfe valley. Michael Sherbrook, in his late-sixteenth-century history of the dissolution, recounts questioning his father's participation in such looting. His father, despite 'thinking well of the Religious Persons and of the Religion then used', responded, 'What should I do ... might I not as well as others have some Profit of the Spoil of the Abbey? For I did see all would away; and therefore I did as others did'.[8]

Although Henry had promised that his enhanced wealth would benefit charitable, religious and educational institutions, only 15% of the total monastic wealth was used for this purpose. He re-founded eight of the nine former monastic cathedrals, created six new bishoprics (Bristol, Chester, Gloucester, Oxford, Peterborough, and Westminster) and endowed Trinity College in Cambridge and Christ Church in Oxford.

In March 1540, the surrender of Waltham Abbey, which appropriately contained the 500-year-old tomb of Harold II, the last Saxon King of England, who had died in the Battle of Hastings, brought the dissolution to an end without Henry ever having had legislative authority to move on anything other than the smaller establishments. There were no nunneries, abbeys or monasteries left operating in England and their treasuries, land, artefacts and building materials now belonged to the king. In addition, all shrines, chantry chapels, tombs and churches were emptied. Monastic life ceased to exist in England and the church suffered a blow from which it has never recovered.

[1] Bale, John, *Illustrium majoris Britanniae scriptorum, hoc est, Angliae, Cambriae, ac Scotiae Summarium,* (A Summary of the Famous Writers of Great Britain, that is, of England, Wales and Scotland), John Overton, Ipswich and Wesel, 1548.

[2] Singleton, Esther, *Romantic Castles and Palaces,* Dodd, Mead & Co, New York, 1901, p. 227.

[3] Sydmonds, John Addington, *The Palace of Urbino,* quoted in Singleton, *op. cit.*

[4] Ernst, Gerhard, 'No quyckar merchaundyce than lybrary bokes: John Bale's commodification of manuscript culture', *Renaissance Quarterly,* June 22, 2007 reproduced in the Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition. Copyright 2008, Columbia University Press.

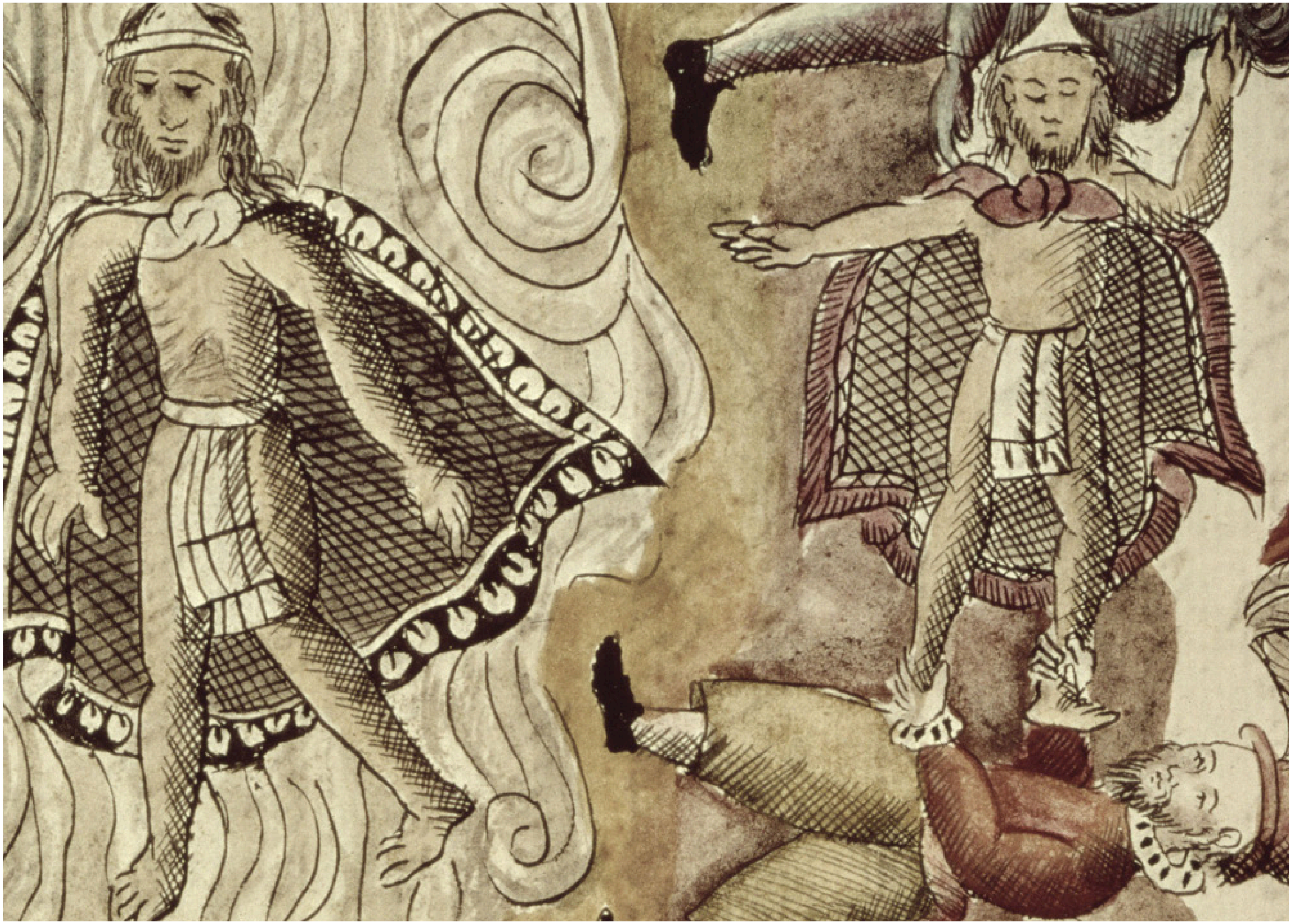
[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] *Ibid.*

4 - Spanish colonisation of the Americas, Francisco Pizarro and Hernan Cortes



The bodies of Montezuma and Itzquauhtzin are cast out of the palace by the Spaniards. Detail from a 16th-century drawing.

> They picked it up and fingered it like monkeys. It was as if their hearts were satisfied, brightened, calmed. For in truth they thirsted mightily for gold; they stuffed themselves with it; they starved for it; they lusted after it like pigs.
>
> - Aztecs commenting on the Spanish conquistadors when presented with gold.[1]

While Christopher Columbus discovered the Caribbean, including Cuba and Haiti, in 1492, it was Giovanni Cabot who first discovered North America in 1497, although this was a rediscovery, as the Norseman Leif Ericson had landed there in *c.* 1003. Cabot sailed under the flag of England and the sponsorship of Henry VIII.

Henry VIII's instructions were quite clear and granted him, 'full and free authority, leave, and power, to sail to all parts, countries, and seas, of the East, of the West, and of the North, under our banners and ensigns, with five ships ... and as many mariners or men as they will have in said ships, upon their own proper costs and charges, to seek out, discover, and find, whatsoever isles, countries, regions or provinces of the heathen and infidels, whatsoever they be, and in what part of the world soever they be, which before this time have been unknown to all Christians.'[2] Cabot went ashore at Newfoundland on his second visit in 1497, probably at Cape Breton Island, and claimed possession. However, Henry became distracted with the dissolution of the monasteries and it was not until the late sixteenth century that Britain embarked on colonising North America on a scale to ultimately rival the Spanish in South America.

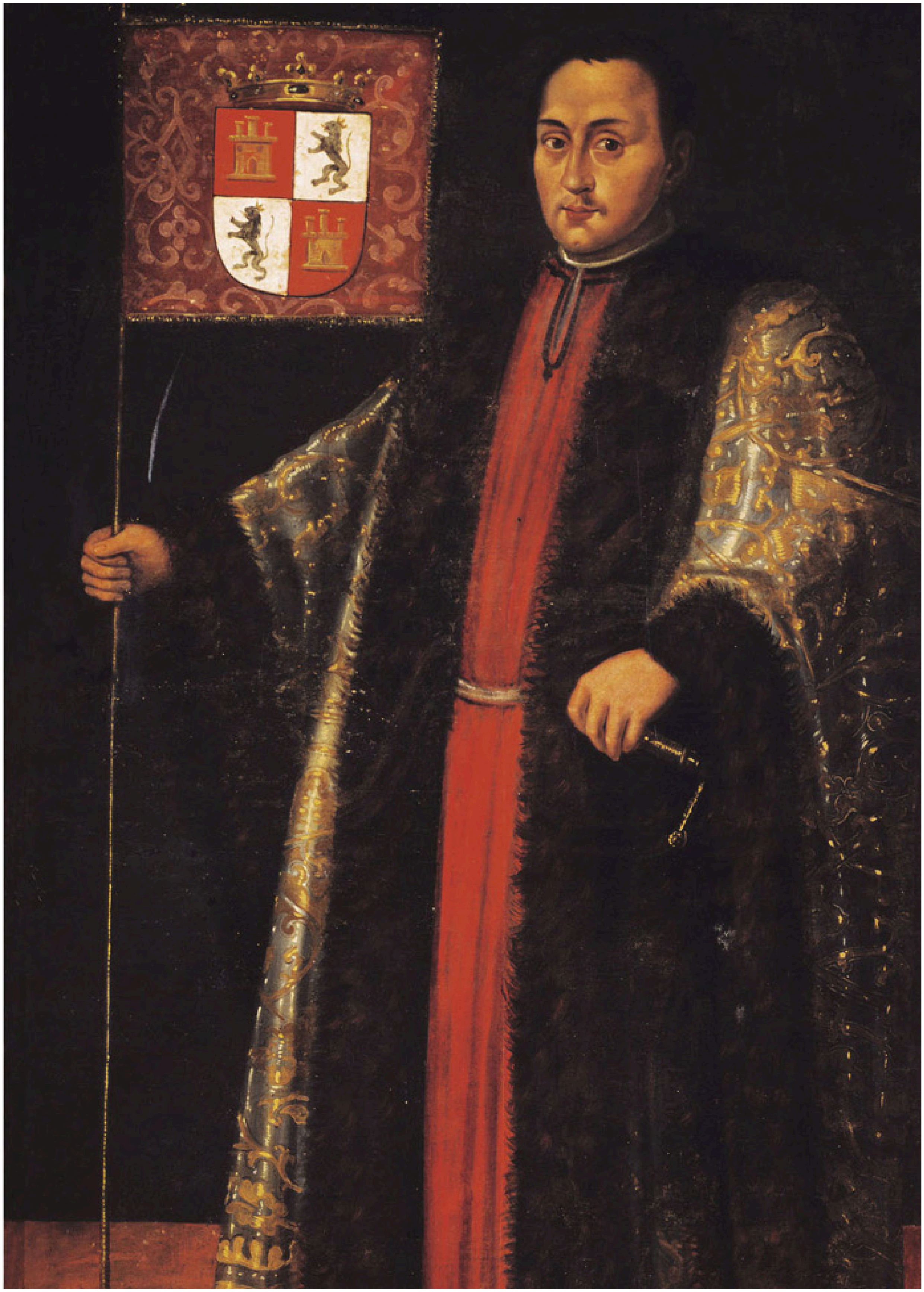
Although the French, Germans and British all tried to establish themselves in South America, it was the Spanish who, with the arrival of Columbus, spent over three centuries extending their empire from small trading posts in the Caribbean to the majority of South America, Central America, Mexico and the Pacific and Caribbean coast of north America.

Columbus's discovery came at a fortuitous time for Spain at the end of five centuries of the Reconquista, when Spain had conquered the Moors and driven them out of Southern Spain. The final stronghold of the Moors, the Alhambra, fell to King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile in 1492. These hard-fought victories had developed a culture amongst the Spanish leadership for military expansion and the establishment of effective government after victory, placing Spain in a better position to exploit the vast treasures of South America than her European competitors.

Columbus returned from his first trip with 25 slaves (of whom 7 survived the trip) and enough gold, parrots and exotica to persuade the Spanish to finance a further larger expedition. He returned to western Hispaniola (Haiti) in 1493 and started the tradition of brutal Spanish domination over the local population of Arawaks and Taino Indians. Columbus's son Ferdinand Columbus relates in the biography of his father: 'The soldiers mowed down dozens with point-blank volleys, loosed the dogs to rip open limbs and bellies, chased fleeing Indians into the bush to skewer them on sword and pike and "with God's aid" soon gained complete victory, killing many Indians and capturing others who were also killed'.[3]

Columbus didn't find gold but his value to Spain was in the land he discovered and laying down an effective colonial template for later Spanish explorers. He started a slave trade back to Spain and forced the locals to mine for gold, provide sexual companionship and grow food for his soldiers. Columbus made his fourth and final trip to the Americas in 1502 and captured a large canoe full of trading goods off what is now Honduras, which confirmed the existence of a trading civilisation on a nearby mainland.

As the gold and exotic stories filtered back to Spain, a series of Spanish explorers embarked on expeditions with varying success. A lead investor usually advanced the bulk of required capital to a captain to outfit some ships, men and equipment. Smaller investors contributed for an agreed percentage of the booty if the expedition was successful. Each expedition required considerable capital to pay for the ships, horses, clothing, weapons and supplies. Individual soldiers usually provided their own equipment for a small wage and a share in the spoils. The trips attracted soldiers, mercenaries, explorers, minor aristocracy, disappointed courtiers, and criminals on the run, and they were effectively pirates backed by businessmen or the state.



Christopher Columbus (1451-1506), by unknown 16th-century Spanish artist.

In 1497, as Cabot was charting Newfoundland, Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine pilot sailing under the flag of Spain, entered the Gulf of Mexico and charted much of the United States, predating Columbus's discovery of the mainland. In 1513 Vasco Núñez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and became the first European to see the Pacific Ocean from the west coast of Central America. He claimed all the Pacific Ocean and adjoining lands for Spain. The Spanish conquistadors Francisco Pizarro and Hernan Cortes carved out extensive territories in Central America, ostensibly under missionary zeal but driven by the scent of gold, of which huge quantities began to flow back to Spain. Fernando II of Spain was quite clear when he ordered in 1511, 'Get gold, humanely if possible, but at all hazards, get gold'.

Within 60 years of Columbus's discovery, there were Spanish colonies from northern Mexico to southern Chile, from the Pacific to the Atlantic coasts, and as far north as Florida, Alabama and Georgia. 200,000 Spanish settlers were dispatched to South America in the sixteenth century. They created large sugar plantations, imported plants and animals, and vast estates. They established *ecomiendas*, estates or fiefdoms for leading Spaniards. In his *ecomiendas* a Spaniard overlord had the right to use the local population as slaves to work his farms and the mines. The local population in Peru, ravaged by disease, declined from 1.3m in 1570 to 600,000 in 1605.

The Spanish were quite clear in their moral high ground over the heathen and their treatment of them. When Rodrigo de Bastidas landed in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in 1514, he read out the following proclamation on the beach on arrival:

> I assure you that with the help of God I will enter powerfully against you, and I will make war on you in every place and in every way that I can, and I will subject you to the yoke and obedience of the church and their highnesses, and I will take your persons and your women and your children, and I will make them slaves, and as such I will sell them, and dispose of them as their highnesses command: I will take your goods, and I will do you all the evils and harms which I can, just as to vassals who do not obey and do not want to receive their lord, resist him and contradict him. And I declare that the deaths and harms

> which arise from this will be your fault, and not that of their highnesses, nor mine, nor of the gentlemen who have come with me here.[4]

Two of the most successful of the early conquistadors were Hernan Cortez in the Aztec Empire and Francisco Pizarro in the Incan empire. Francisco Pizarro Gonzales (*c.* 1471-1541) was from a modest background, the illegitimate son of an infantry colonel called Gonzalo Pizarro Rodriguez de Aquilar, who fought in the Italian and Navarre campaigns under Fernandez de Cordoba. Aquilar had a small land holding at Trujillo and Pizarro grew up helping to herd the pigs. He never learnt to read and write, but was ruthless, cunning and determined. His soldiers respected him because he shared in their labours, and led them into combat from the front. He was a rousing speaker and frequently managed to inspire his troops. Although he started out a pig herder, he ended up 1st Marquess de los Atabillos, Governor of Peru and one of the richest men in South America.

Pizarro sailed to the Americas in 1502 alongside 2500 settlers. He accompanied Vasco Núñez de Balboa across the Isthmus of Panama in 1513 and worked his way up the Spanish South American hierarchy. When reports of ‘Piru’, a fabulous land of gold and riches to the south, began to filter back to Panama, Pizarro formed a partnership to explore and conquer the south with the soldier Diego de Almagro and the priest Hernando de Luque. They agreed verbally to divide the spoils three ways if successful and gave the project the title ‘Emporesa del Levante’. They also agreed that Pizarro was the leader, Almagro would provide the food and military muscle and Luque was in charge of finances.

Pizarro’s first expedition was a disaster because of inclement weather, food shortages and native attacks, and Almagro lost an eye in battle. Two years later, the same team, with the half-hearted permission of the governor of Panama, Pedrarias Davila, set off with 160 men and two horses. Pizarro’s main pilot, Bartolomé Ruiz, captured a raft of natives from Tumbes containing some gold, silver and emeralds, which lifted morale. However, various setbacks caused the new Governor of Panama, Pedro de los Rios, to order the expedition back to Panama. Pizarro had no intention of returning and said, ‘There lies Peru with its riches; Here, Panama and its poverty. Choose, each man, what best becomes a brave Castilian’.[5] The 13 men who stayed with Pizarro became known as the Famous Thirteen (*Los trece de la fama*) and entered Spanish folklore. After more mishaps, the expedition finally reached Tumbes, where Pizarro saw considerable evidence of gold and silver in the decorations and ornaments of the chief's residence.

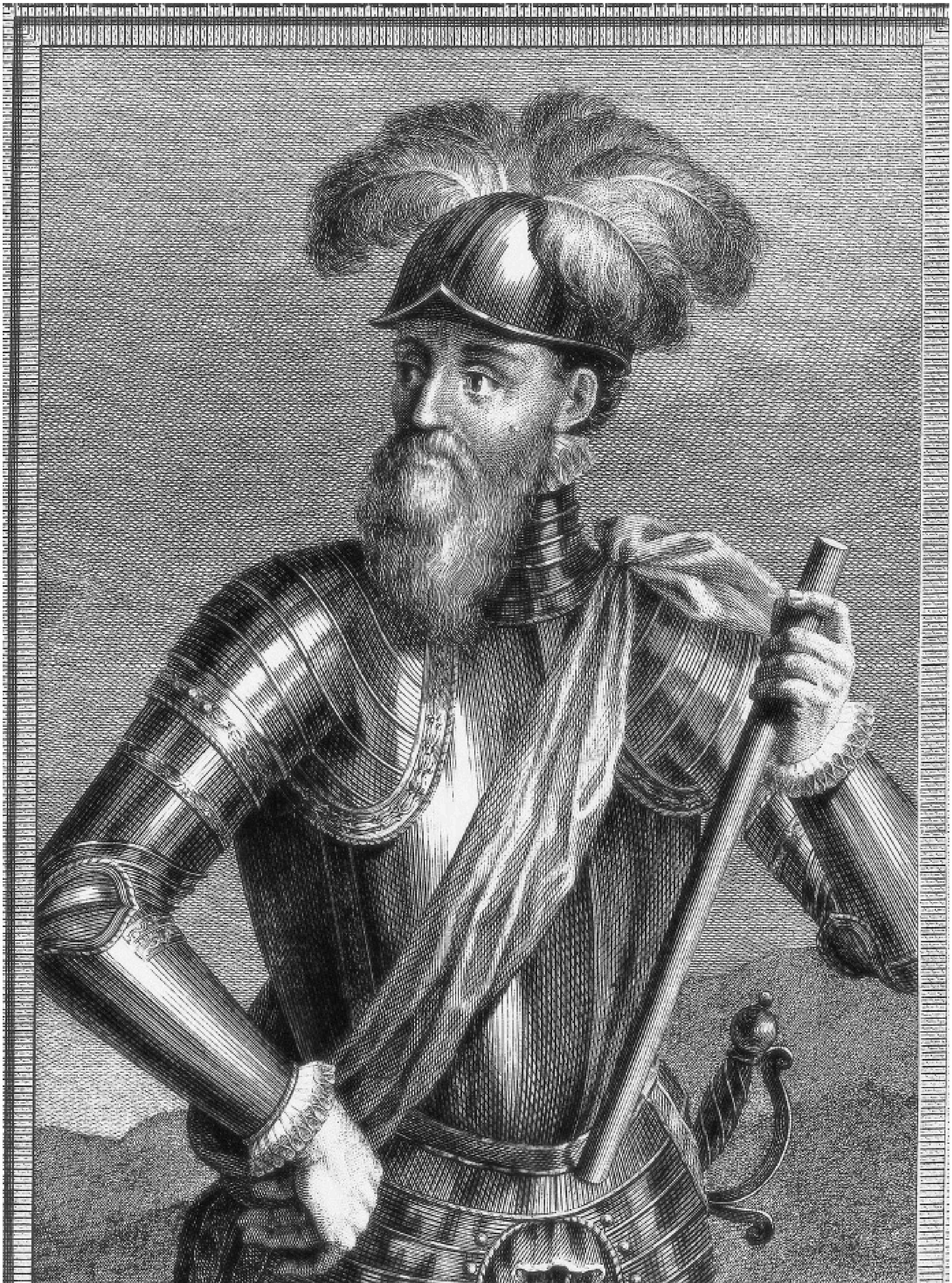
With continuing resistance from the Governor, Pedro de los Rios, Pizarro returned to Spain and, after 18 months at court, where he received encouragement from the great conquistador Cortes, he managed to get the support of Queen Isabel who signed the Capitulacion de Toledo giving Pizarro permission to conquer Peru and allowing him to become Governor. Joined by his brothers, 3 ships, 27 horses and 180 men, he set sail in 1529.

The Incan king, Atahuallpa, had moved to the town of Caxamarca where he could enjoy the famous hot springs. He was surrounded by an army of 80,000 men and was more curious about the approaching Spanish than alarmed.

Pizarro's men struggled with their horses towards Caxamarca up the narrow paths designed for the smaller Incas with their mules. There were several points in the passes they expected the Incas to defend, but their way was left open. Whereas heat had been a problem in the tropical forests, as they climbed up the mountain passes, the soldiers and horses suffered from the bitter cold. They climbed over 4100 metres and many of the soldiers experienced altitude sickness. The hardwoods gave way to pine and alpine plants. Condors circled above them and followed them over the Andes.

Pizarro and his troops began to believe that Atahuallpa was luring them into his own arena of choice and when rumours of the size of his army began to reach the soldiers they became nervous. Pizarro cloaked their actions under the mantle of God at such moments and if he had any private doubts he kept them to himself. He rallied the troops below Caxamarca with, 'Let every one of you take heart and go forward like a good soldier, nothing daunted by the smallness of your numbers. For in the greatest extremity God ever fights for his own; and doubt not, he will humble the pride of the heathen, and bring him the knowledge of the true faith, the great end and object of the Conquest'.[6]

The small unit descended the eastern side of the Andes and entered the rich and cultivated valley of Caxamarca. They saw the huge army of Atahuallpa camped on the far side of the town next to the hot springs and one of the soldiers commentated, 'It filled us with amazement to behold the Indians occupying so proud a position! So many tents, so well appointed, as were never seen in the Indies till now. But it was too late to turn back now, or betray the slightest sign of weakness... So with as bold a countenance as we could, after coolly surveying the ground, we prepared our entrance into Caxamalca’.[7]



Francisco Pizarro (1475-1541), Spanish conqueror of Inca Empire and Peru. Engraving, 16th century.

The Spanish adopted a fighting formation of three platoons and entered the city in the late afternoon of 15th November 1532. The 10,000 inhabitants had been ordered out of the city by Atahuallpa. The Spanish took up quarters in the centre of the town. Pizarro sent out a party to meet with the Incas immediately. He selected Hernando de Soto and his brother Hernando and sent them off with 15 cavalry and 20 soldiers. With trumpets sounding and banners waving, they rode up to the Incan army unopposed and found Atahuallpa with his court near the hot springs that remain there today. Atahuallpa wore the royal crimson fringe around his forehead and received them sitting on a low cushion surrounded by his nobles and personal guard.

De Soto and Hernando Pizarro said they had come to offer their services to the King and impart the doctrines of the Christian faith to the Incas. Atahuallpa said nothing. Finally, he said, ‘Tell your captain I am keeping a fast, which will end tomorrow morning. I will then visit him, with my chieftains. In the meantime, let him occupy the public buildings on the square, and no other, till I come, when I will order what will be done’.[8]

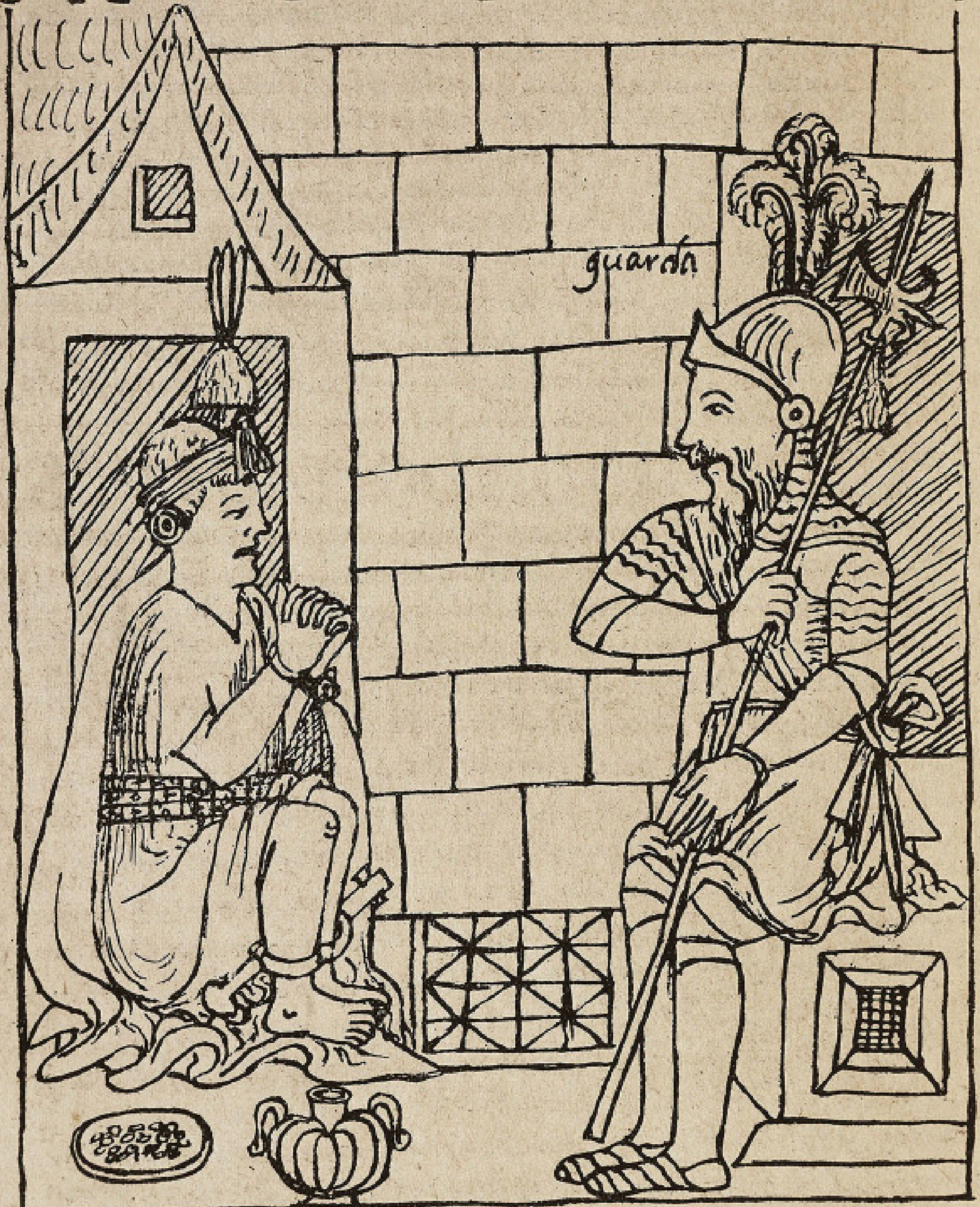
The Spanish reported back to Pizarro and the soldiers became very anxious, particularly when the Inca army lit fires, ‘as thick as the stars in Heaven’. Pizarro inspired his soldiers that evening with a mixture of chivalrous adventure and religious zeal. His fighting Dominican priest, Fray Vicente de Valverde, assured the men that they were God’s own army.

Pizarro called a council of war with his lieutenants and laid out his plan. They couldn’t attack the Incas because they would be massacred. They couldn’t flee because the Incas would hunt them down. His plan was to invite Atahuallpa into the square for a talk because the square couldn’t hold more than around 10,000 soldiers and then ambush them and seize Atahuallpa. Without their leader, the Inca army would disintegrate. He would invite Atahuallpa to come unarmed as a gesture of friendship and with the huge number advantage he might feel secure enough to oblige. It was a desperate plan fraught with problems.

The following day, Pizarro split his cavalry into two sections under De Sota and Hernando and placed them in buildings either side of the square. He kept 20 men with him and split the rest around the square. The troops were well fed and horses watered and a mass was said. As the Spanish waited nervously, Atahuallpa sent a message that he would come armed as the Spanish had come to him the day before. The Incas descended towards the town and then pitched camp in front of the gates, sending another message that they would enter the town the following morning.

CONQVISTA

PRESO ATAGVALPA ỸGA



preso ataqualpa en la ciudad de caxamarca

como ataqualpa ynga dixo a don fran^co^ pizarro q̃ leyese un escrito dixo q̃ no sauia y dixo q̃ la leyese un soldado y leyo dijo ataqualpa

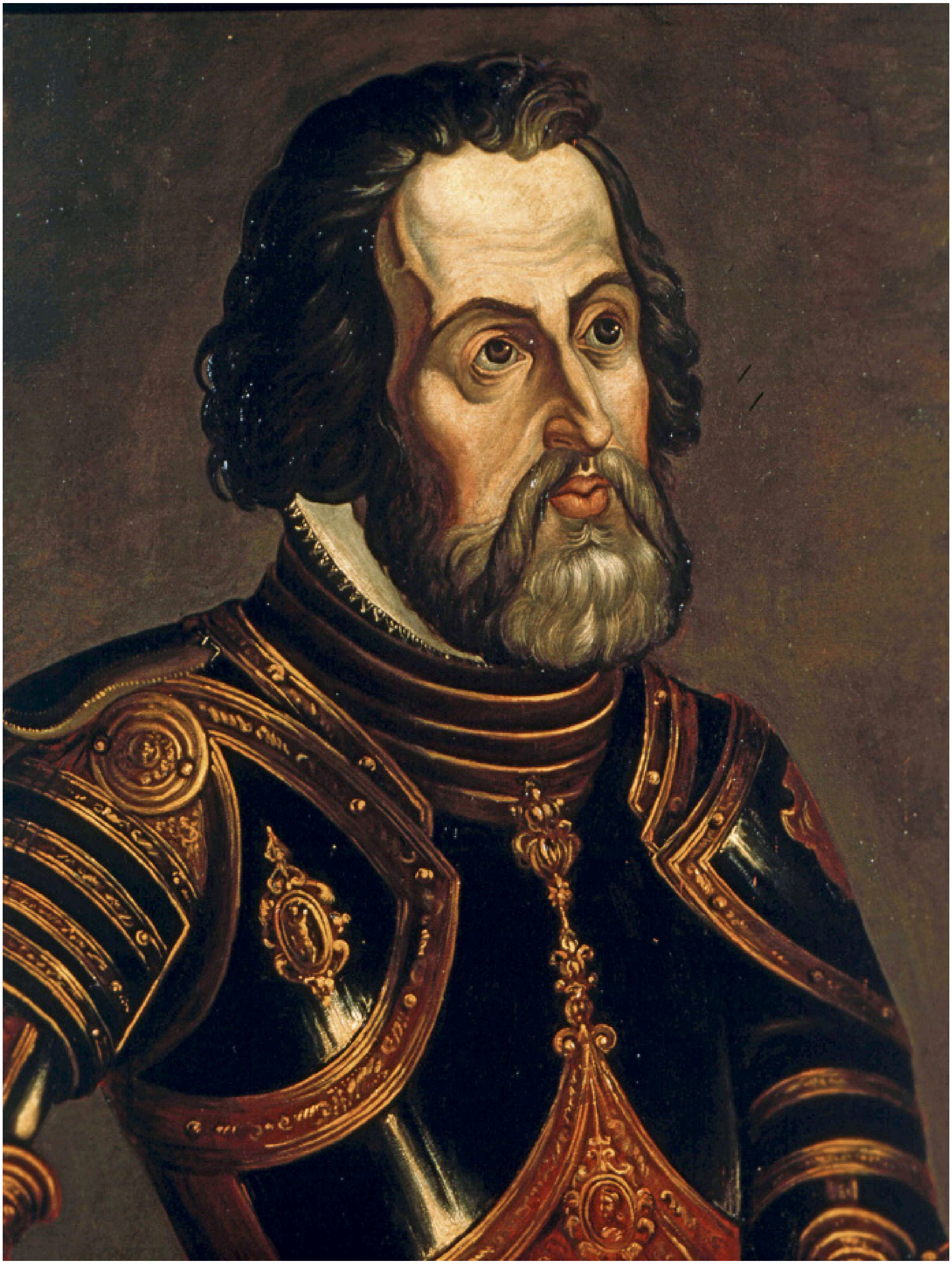
llustration from *New Chronicle and Good Government* by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala representing Inca King Atahuallpa, prisoner of Spanish conqueror Pizarro in Cajamarca, 1533.

The Incas duly entered the town the following morning. They filled the square with at least 10,000 men and Atahuallpa wore a heavy necklace of emeralds and sat on a throne of solid gold carried by attendants. Pizarro kept all his men hidden and sent out the priest Valverde to talk to the king. Valverde approached him with nothing but a bible and a breviary and started talking to him about the Christian faith and how he should convert. Atahuallpa replied, ‘I will be no man’s tributary, I am greater than any prince on earth’. He took Valverde’s bible and threw it on the ground, saying, ‘Tell your comrades that they shall give me an account of their doings in my land. I will not go from here till they have made me a full satisfaction for all the wrongs they have committed’.[9]

Valverde picked up the bible from the ground and went back to Pizarro and said, ‘Do you not see that, while we stand here wasting our breath on this dog, full of pride as he is, the fields are filling with Indians? Set on, at once, I absolve you’. Pizarro then waved a white scarf above his head and every Spaniard opened fire before charging into the square. The Indians were completely surprised that such a small force would attack them and the lethal volley of small-arms fire and artillery ripped into them in the confined space. The Spanish cavalry charged and fell upon them as they tried to escape. Part of the town walls collapsed in the scrum and many Indians died in the crush as they tried to flee.

Pizarro cut his way through to Atahuallpa to protect him from the carnage and managed to grab him, despite being accidentally knifed in the arm by one of his own men. The Spanish record that 2000 Incas were killed but Incan sources put it higher at 10,000. Pizarro managed to drag Atahuallpa out of the melee and dined with him that evening as his soldiers piled the dead Incas into great heaps. Pizarro had been disappointed that there was no gold in the city and he discussed this with Atahuallpa. Atahuallpa quickly realised the importance of gold to the Europeans and that this might be his way out of captivity. He suggested to Pizarro that the only way Pizarro would get the gold would be if Atahuallpa ordered his men to produce it.

Pizarro was very resourceful, having survived countless sorties with the Indians, two trips across the Atlantic, three expeditions into unexplored and unmapped parts of South America, and defeated an army of 80,000 with 180 men. He quickly came up with a plan. He offered Atahuallpa freedom if he would pay a ransom of enough gold to fill a 7×5 m room and silver to fill two rooms of similar size. The gold was not to be melted down, which would have been in Pizarro's favour as more could have been fitted into the rooms in ingots but could be in whatever format it came.



Hernando Cortes (1485-1547), by Maestro de Saldana.

At Atahuallpa’s command, the gold started to arrive rapidly. The soldiers were stunned to see the quality of the carving on the objects that the Indians started bringing in on carts which included gold chalices, plates, necklaces, exotic birds and animals and ceremonial plaques and staffs. Once the rooms were full, Pizarro engaged the Indian goldsmiths to melt down much of the gold into easily transported ingots. The Indians took a month to melt down all the gold into bars of a uniform size, which were carefully weighed under the inspector of the Spanish crown.

The share of the Spanish King, known as the Royal Fifth, was duly removed first as per the agreement Pizarro had reached with Charles I and Queen Isabel. The total amount of gold was 1,326,539 pesos. William Prescott, in his history of this period, *The History of the Conquest of Peru*, basing his calculation on the previous work of Senor Clemincin, former secretary of the Royal Academy of Madrid, calculated that at the time of his writing in 1855, the value of this gold was 15½ million US dollars. In line with CPI, this would be around US$400m in 2008, a staggering haul of loot.

Atahuallpa was demanding his release. Pizarro charged Atahuallpa with having killed his own brother and plotting against Pizarro. Father Valverde signed off the death warrant saying, ‘in his opinion, the Inca, at all events, deserved to die’. A few of the Spanish voiced their objection to this as murder, but Pizarro justified it saying that, whilst Atahuallpa was still alive, there would be a figure for Incan opposition to rally round. On the night of the 29th August 1533 the entire Spanish contingent gathered in the square to watch the Incan king go up in flames. Valverde walked by his side trying, unsuccessfully, to get the king to convert before his death.

Pizarro then divided the spoils. He was scrupulously fair with his soldiers but short-changed one of his original partners Almagro and his troops because Almagro hadn’t actually been present at the battle, a decision Pizarro would come to regret. Having deducted the Royal Fifth he himself took 57,222 pesos of gold and 2350 marks of silver as well as Atahuallpa’s gold throne, valued at 25,000 pesos. His brother Hernando received 31,080 pesos of gold and 2350 silver marks. De Soto received 17,740 pesos of gold and 724 marks of silver. The remaining cavalry received 8880 gold pesos and 362 marks of silver. The infantry received half that. In a fleeting moment of largesse Pizarro endowed the new church of San Fernando, the first Christian church in Peru with 2220 gold pesos.[10]

With the arrival of some reinforcements Pizarro set off with 500 men for Cuzco, the Capital, in September. The Incas laid rocks and obstacles in their way and harassed them. Before they left, Pizarro moved the treasure to Xauxa, where he left a guard of 40 soldiers. Pizarro arrived at Cuzco on 15th November and entered the city of 200,000 unopposed. His troops soon plundered the city. They stripped off the jewels and rich ornaments that garnished the royal mummies in the temple of Coricancha. Wherever they suspected hidden treasure, they tortured the locals until they confessed or died. They dug up the royal graves once they learnt of the Peruvian habit of burying valuables with the dead. They emptied the palaces of their gold and silver and found a great stash of golden vases decorated with serpents, locusts and animals in a nearby cave, together with four golden llamas and twelve statues of women, all life size. Several of these were sent to Spain as part of the Royal Fifth. They also found jewellery, gold slippers and dresses of beaded gold.

As at Caxamarca the booty was melted down into ingots. There were now 480 men including the guard left at Xauxa and the gold and silver were shared in the same ratio as at Caxamarca, with cavalry getting twice as much as infantry. Sancho, the royal notary, on a document countersigned by Pizarro and the royal treasurer Riquelme, estimated the whole amount at less than at Caxamarca, not exceeding 580,200 pesos of gold and 215,000 marks of silver. The price of normal goods skyrocketed and fortunes were gambled away overnight. One cavalry man named Leguizano received as part of his share a gold-burnished image of the sun removed from one of the temples. He lost it gambling on the first night and this gave rise to the Spanish saying *Juego el Sol antes que amanezca* (play away the sun before sunrise).

Pizarro became Governor of Peru and founded the Peruvian capital Lima on the coast on the 18th January 1535, where it remains. Having short-changed Almagro over the spoils of Caxamarca, he later fell out with him and spent much of his remaining years fighting with Almagro's people. Almagro was finally defeated at the battle of Las Salinas in 1538 and executed, but a group of Almagro's son's supporters caught up with Pizarro in his palace in Lima on the 26th June 1541. Most of Pizarro's guests fled, except for his half-brother Alcantera, who was killed. Pizarro, now 70 years old, stood his ground and killed three of the attackers before being stabbed in the throat and killed.

Pizarro left a mixed legacy. He is thought of as a great conquistador in Spain and brought Peru under Spanish control, but is considered a criminal in Peru and in 2003 a statue of him in Lima had to be removed after lobbying from the indigenous and mixed-race majority. Whereas the locals had just panned for gold and silver, the Spanish brought mining technology with them and from 1545, the silver mines at Potosi in modern Bolivia provided enormous wealth for Spain. This region was so rich in tin and silver it eventually had 5000 working mines. Irrespective of the Peruvian or Spanish viewpoint, Pizarro remains one of the most successful looters of all time.

The other leading Spanish conquistador of the period was Hernan (also known as Fernando and Hernando) Cortes (1485-1547), a distant cousin of Francisco Pizarro through his mother. Cortes was responsible for conquering the Aztec race in what is Mexico today with a combination of guile, ruthlessness, violence and luck. He became immensely rich and the incalculable amount of gold and silver subsequently removed from Mexico launched Spain on a dazzling trajectory that allowed her to dominate Europe throughout the sixteenth century.

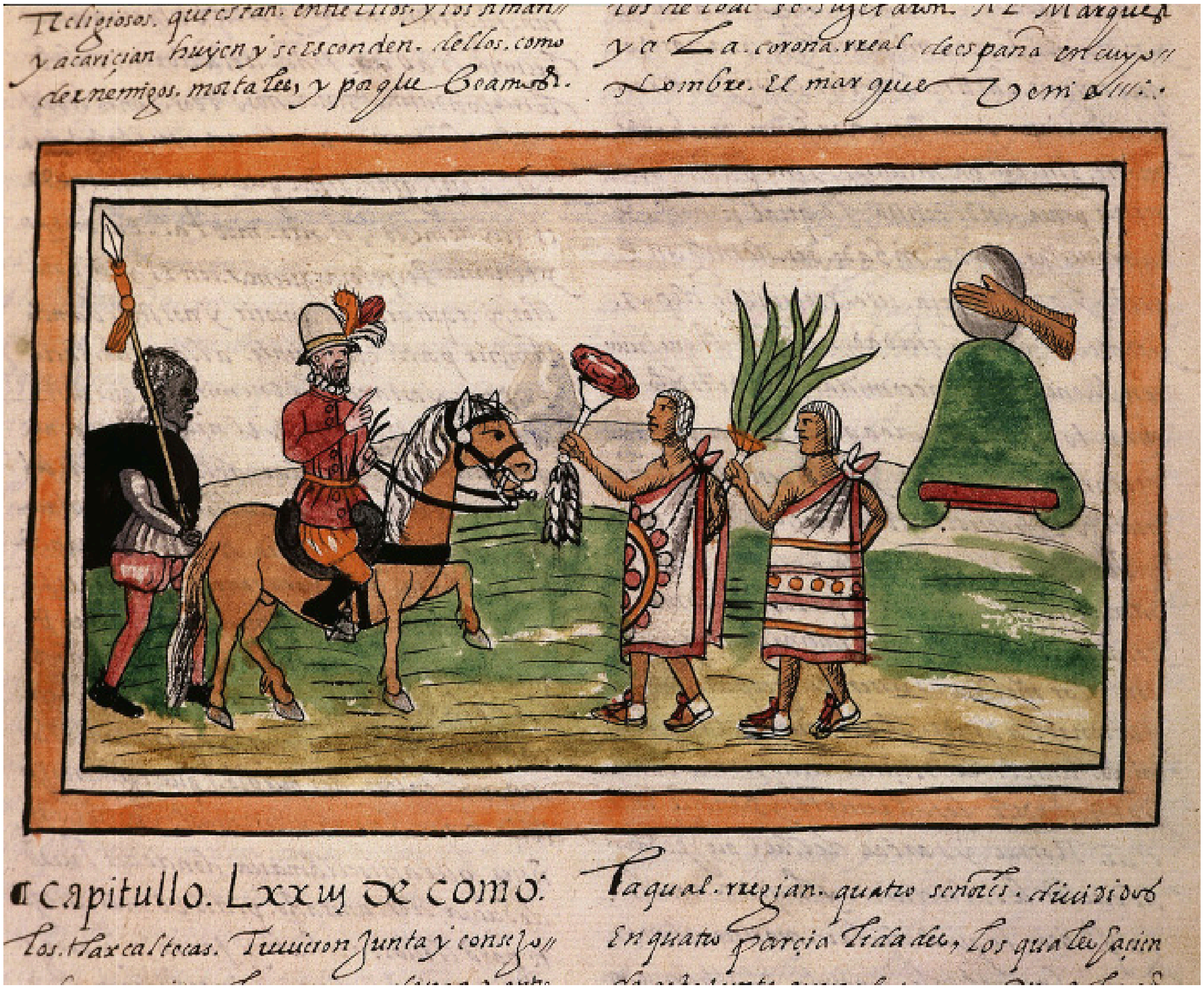
Cortes was born in 1485 at Medellin, in the province of Extramadura, in the Kingdom of Castile in Spain. He came from an impoverished minor noble family. He studied law and Latin for 2 years at Salamanca University, acquiring valuable legal skills . However, he quickly tired of law and became enthused with the tales of gold and opportunity in the new world that were filtering back to Spain. He left for eastern Hispaniola (present-day Dominican Republic) in 1503 aged 18, worked as a notary and was given a plot of land and some natives to work it. A secretary described him as ruthless, arrogant, quarrelsome and much given to women. Although he was of slight stature, he trained as a soldier and gained a reputation as a good leader, intelligent administrator and a vicious fighter.

The governor of Cuba, Diego Velasquez, selected him as a clerk assigned to the treasurer of the expedition. Cortes was made mayor of the new city of Santiago acquiring land and slaves. With 3 ships and 300 men they conquered Cuba after several massacres, including one where they burnt the native chief Hatuey alive. In 1518 Cortes sailed for Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec empire, with 508 men and 16 horses on an expedition largely financed by himself. He took a few small cannons that fired rounded rocks and weapons such as muskets, crossbows, pikes and swords. Governor Velasquez had a last-minute change of heart about

Cortes's expedition but Cortes ignored his protest and sailed anyway, making his voyage illegal and developing a lifelong enemy.

Cortes maintained he was a Christian warrior 'I said everything to them I could to divert them (the Aztecs) from their idolatries, and draw them to a knowledge of God our Lord'.[11]) However, his real aim was gold and he later told an emissary of the Aztec king Montezuma that his people were stricken by a 'disease of the heart which can only be cured by gold'.[12] Cortes had seen Francisco Hernandez de Cordoba and Juan de Grijalva with 16,000 ingots, but he correctly assumed this must be a fraction of what was there.

It is hard to imagine the hold that gold held over the late medieval mind. A central belief of Mercantilism of the time believed that a state's well-being was based on its holdings of gold and it was the gauge by which most men judged each other. Prior to the arrival of the Spanish in Mexico, gold had held little value to the Aztecs and was used only for decoration and ceremonial purposes. They said it was perfect for these purposes because it was shiny, resistant to corrosion and easy to work with. The Aztecs had no metallic currency and referred to gold as 'the excrement of the gods'[13] and traded it for much more valuable feathers and turquoise. Later, Montezuma mistakenly offered the Spanish gold to leave, trying to protect his feather and turquoise commodities. His actions fired up the Spaniards' gold lust. In the Florentine Codex (an account of the Spanish conquest from the Aztec perspective, written by Bernadino de Sahagun), the Aztecs were astounded by the behaviour of the Spanish when they encountered gold, as evidenced by the quotation at the start of this chapter.



Hernando Cortes (1485-1547), Spanish conquistador, meeting indians of Tlaxcala region, Mexico, from 1579 manuscript *Historia de las Indias* by Diego Duran.

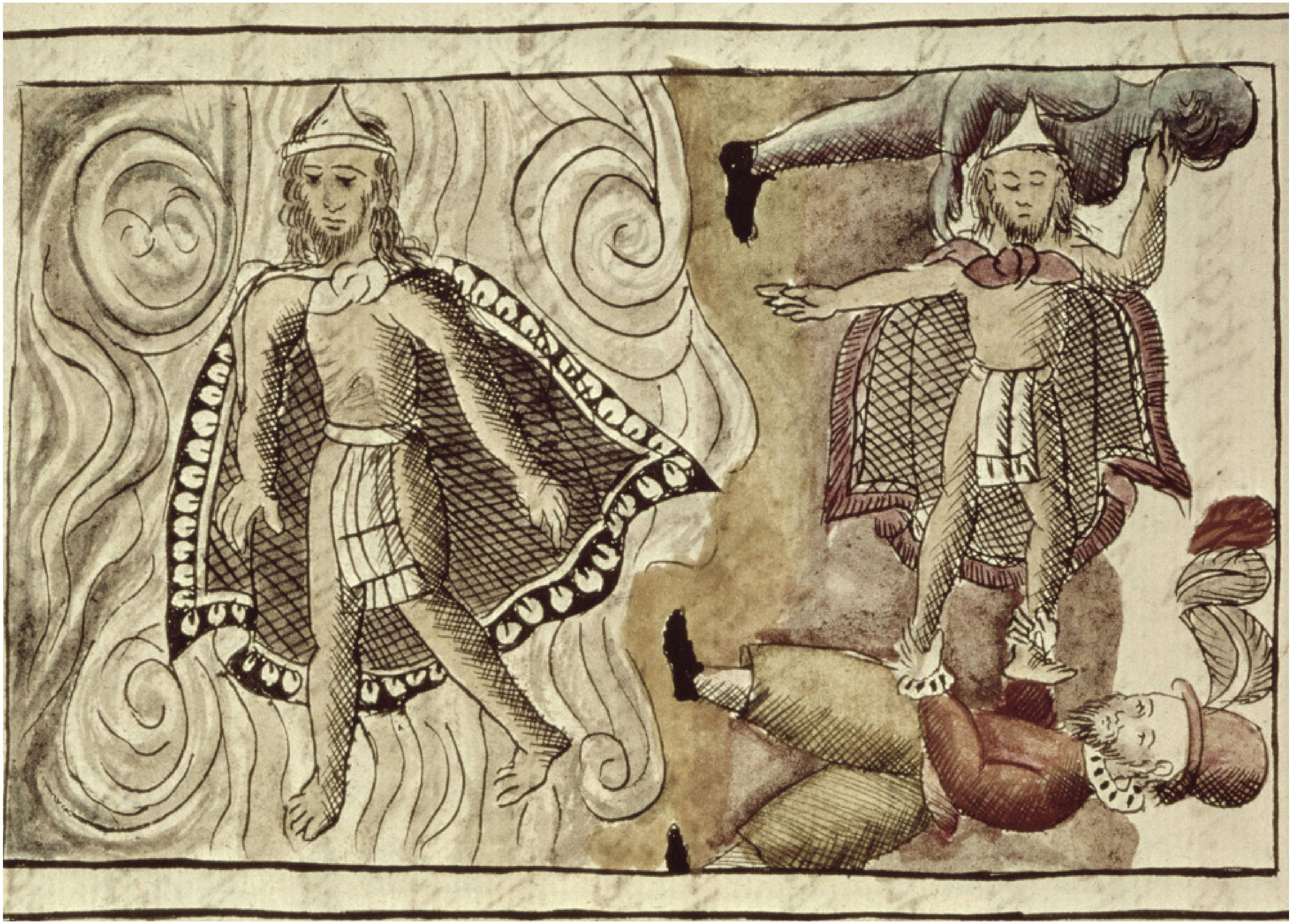
Cortes landed at Cozumel Island on the present-day Yucatan peninsula in Mexico and made his way north along the coast. He famously burnt his boats at Vera Cruz to show his soldiers it was a case of success or perish. Hence the expression still common in Spanish and English. Initially Cortes tricked the Aztecs into giving him gold to make him leave and they gave him plenty. Cortes sent these early tranches of gold directly back to Charles V in Spain to curry favour and try to gloss over the fact that he had disobeyed a direct order from his superior Velasquez.

Cortes moved towards the capital Tenochtitlan, today's Mexico City. After he won a battle at Tabasco, the Aztecs, who had noticed his liking for the local girls, made him a gift of 23 women. This gift included Malinche, a beautiful 19-year-old slave who, speaking both Nahuatl and Maya, became his translator and bore him a son, Martin. Malinche quickly learnt Spanish and her languages allowed him to converse with the various tribes of

Indians, many of whom hated the Aztecs, and formed some key alliances for him.

Luckily for Cortes, the Aztec King Montezuma suspected Cortes might be the Quetselcoatl, the God of Wisdom, who hated human sacrifice and who it was believed would return one day to revenge all the sacrificed souls. Montezuma had personally supervised thousands of sacrifices, so instead of opposing Cortes, Montezuma sent him gifts.

To instil fear into the Aztecs waiting for him at Tenochtitlan (as he later claimed whilst under investigation), Cortes burned Cholula, the second-largest city in Mexico, and massacred thousands of unarmed members of the nobility in the main square. He made alliances with the Nahuas, the Tlaxcaltec and the Totonacs, who swelled his army.



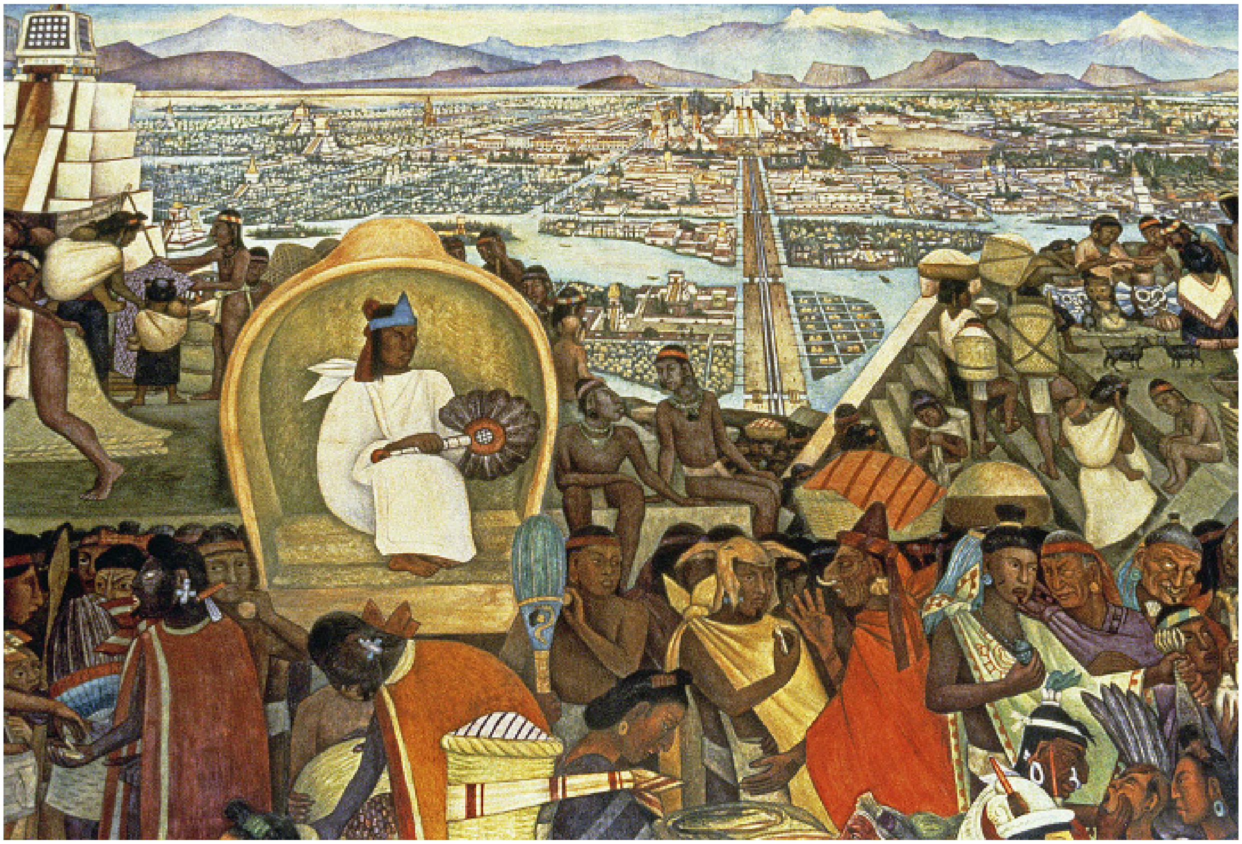
The bodies of Montezuma and Itzquauhtzin are cast out of the palace by the Spaniards, from a history of the Aztecs and the conquest of Mexico, Spanish, 16th century.

When Cortes reached Tenochtitlan Montezuma tried to buy him off and gave him 100,000 ingots of pure gold and a huge quantity of precious stones. The city was situated on an island on Lake Texcoco. Cortes made a small navy and dragged it up to the lake where he had it reassembled. He blockaded the causeways leading into the city, sank the Aztec canoe fleet and destroyed the aquaduct that provided water to the city. After a 3-month siege and brutal street fighting, the city fell on 13th August 1521. Cortes took Montezuma prisoner, a tactic that Pizarro was to use later with Atahuallpa in Peru. Cortes systematically plundered the gold of the new world and within 5 years Mexican gold was responsible for over 10% of world gold production. It took another four decades for Spain to completely empty Mexican gold reserves.

The victory at Tenochtitlan came at enormous cost. Some 30,000 men from the kingdom of Texcoco (as part of the Spanish-Native Confederacy) and 240,000 Aztecs died. Cortes destroyed much of the existing city and laid the foundations of Mexico City. Due to the introduction of European diseases, by 1570 the native population was reduced from over 1.5 million to 325,000. The conquerors took Aztec wives and mistresses, producing the mixed-blood *mestizos*, who account for 60% of Mexico's population today.

Cortes undertook further expeditions to Mexico and northern Central America, including a trip to Honduras which he led personally in 1524, when he killed the Aztec Emperor Cuahtemoc. Eventually, the viceroyalty of New Spain also covered Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, California and Florida. Velasquez sent a force commanded by Panfilo de Narvaez to try and destroy Cortes but Cortes defeated him. Ignoring Velasquez, Charles V appointed Cortes governor and Captain General of Mexico and gave him the fertile valley of Oaxaca, which in 1529 was elevated to a marquisate and came with 23,000 vassals.

Cortes founded several cities, introduced the *ecomiendas* land tenure system and supported efforts to evangelise the indigenous peoples to Christianity. He attempted to grow sugar and was the first to import African slaves into Mexico. At the time of his death, his estate contained 200 slaves who were either Africans or of African descent.



Detail from *The Great City of Tenochtitlan*, from the 'Pre-Hispanic and Colonial Mexico' cycle, 1945 (fresco) by Diego Rivera (1886-1957).

Cortes eventually returned to Spain. Re-establishing his position, he returned to Mexico and retired to his estates at Cuernavaca, 30 miles south of Mexico City, where he built his palace between 1530 and 1541, but he had to return to Spain again in 1541 to see off his critics and enemies. This time Charles V, jealous of Cortes's power and wealth, refused to see him, but Cortes forced his way through a crowd surrounding the Emperor's carriage. When Charles demanded to know who he was, Cortes famously replied, 'I am a man who has given you more provinces than your ancestors left you cities'. Cortes served Charles on one final unsuccessful expedition to Algiers where he had his horse killed underneath him in battle and nearly drowned in a storm that struck his fleet while he pursued Barbarossa Heyreddin Pasha.

By now, Cortes had spent much of his enormous fortune and applied to the Spanish Court for some reward, but the court avoided him for 3 years. Disgusted, he decided to retire to his estates in Mexico but he died from dysentery en route in Seville on 2nd December 1547, aged 62. Before he died he had the Pope legitimise his numerous mestizos and white children and he left them and his wives well cared for. His remains were sent back to Mexico

City and placed in an institution he had founded, the church of the Hospital of Jesus. However, his body has been moved eight times to avoid destruction and currently resides in the Church of Jesus in Mexico City.

Cortes’s legacy is also a mixed one, depending on the Spanish or the Mexican standpoint. However, the sack and destruction of an entire nation with a force of 600 men against an army of over 100,000 remains an audacious feat seldom equalled. Given the nickname Killer Cortes by his own men, he financed Spain for over 100 years by destroying a nation.

[1] Cocker, Mark, *Rivers of Blood, Rivers of Gold,* Grove Press, New York, 1988, p. 88.

[2] Croxton, Derek, *The Cabot Dilemma. John Cabot's Voyage and the Limits of Historiography,* The University of Virginia, Vol. 33, 1990-1991.

[3] Sale, Kirkpatrick, *Christopher Columbus and the Conquest of Paradise,* Alfred Knopf, New York, 1990.

[4] Tairona Heritage Trust, *The Spanish Invasion of South America,* www.eremite.co.uk.

[5] This quote is often repeated by historians down the ages but the present writer has not been able to discover its original source.

[6] Prescott, William, *History of the Conquest of Peru,* 2 vols, Routledge, London, 1855, Vol. 1, p. 247.

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 254.

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 260.

[9] *Ibid.,* p. 272.

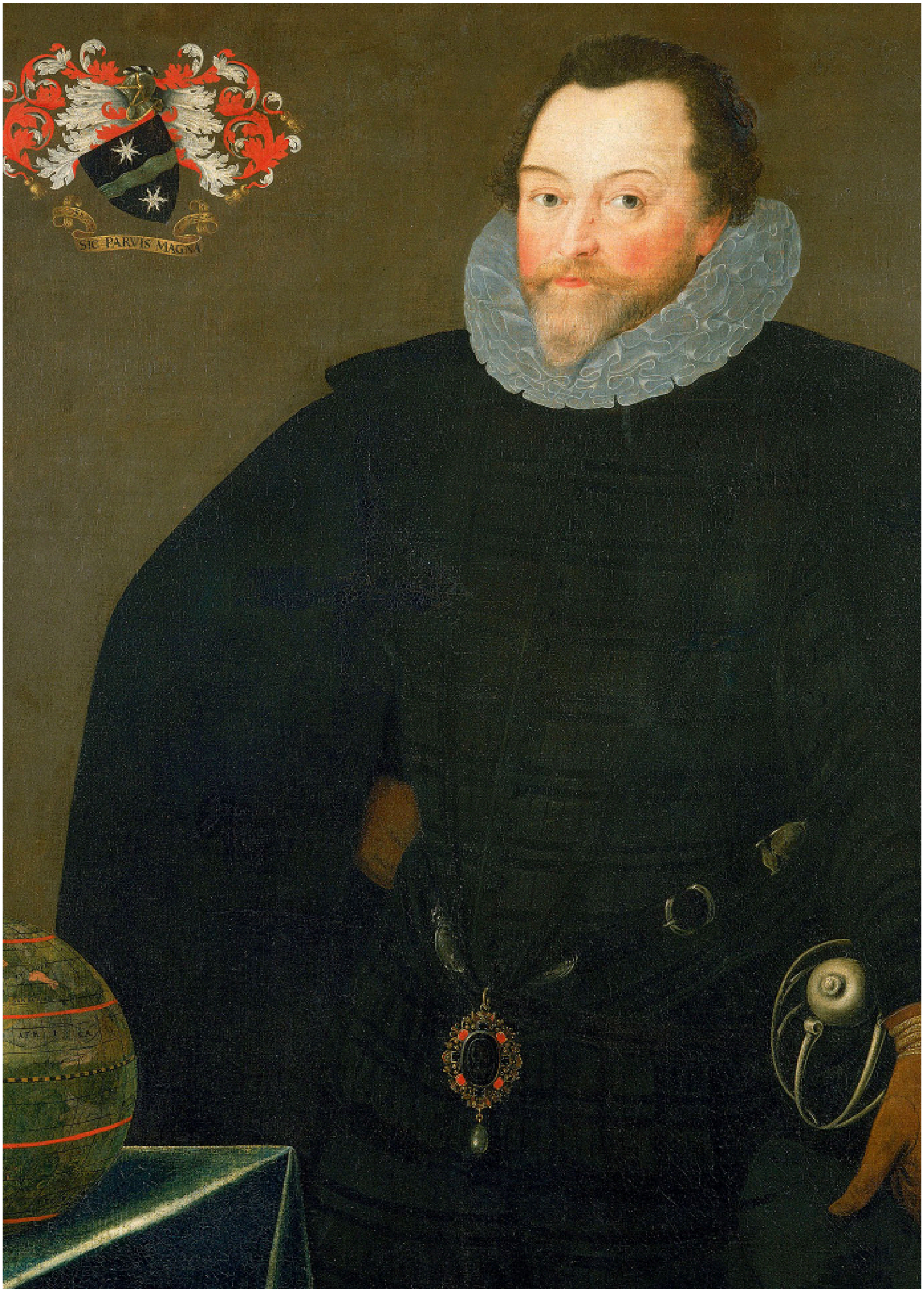
[10] *Ibid.,* p. 306, relying on the distribution as drawn up and signed by the Royal Notary on a document entitled the *Acta de Raparacion del Rescate* consulted by Prescott amongst the manuscripts of the Spanish scholar Munoz.

[11] Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1911, *Hernan Cortes,* Biography.

[12] Brown, Dale M., *Aztecs: Reign of Blood and Splendor,* Time Life Books, Alexandria, 1992, p. 30.

[13] Guggenheim Museum, *The Aztec Empire: Noble Life and Everyday Life,* Arts curriculum online.

5 - Sir Francis Drake


SIC PARVIS MAGNA
AFRICA

Detail of *Sir Francis Drake* (1540-96) wearing the Drake Jewel, a gift from Elizabeth I. Portrait by Marcus Gheeraerts, (1591).

> 'We still have time to finish the game and to thrash the Spaniards, too.'
>
> - Sir Francis Drake in 1588, playing bowls on Plymouth Hoe when informed the Spanish fleet had appeared on the horizon.[1]

The royal european courts looked on enviously as Spain and Portugal systematically pillaged South America of its gold and silver. Elizabeth I wondered how she could involve England in the Americas. Although England was growing in wealth, population and power, Elizabeth was constantly short of money. Spain jealously guarded its new source of wealth and had established sovereignty over much of the southern Americas. Although Elizabeth could not compete in South America she decided to try and capture the gold on its way back to Spain, proceeding cautiously as Spain was becoming increasing powerful and belligerent. She needed someone capable but low born enough not to be a member of her court, so that if matters failed she could claim ignorance of the venture. She turned to Francis Drake (1539-1596).

Drake was reliable both as a soldier and a sailor and the Queen could count on his loyalty. He was ambitious and a strict puritan who disliked Catholics and loathed the Spanish. A miniature of Drake aged 42 by the Elizabethan court painter Nicolas Hilliard in 1581 shows him as a small man with neat features, brown curly hair and a tidy reddish moustache and pointed beard.

Francis Drake was born in the parish of Crowndale just outside Tavistock in Devon in 1539. He was the eldest son of Edmund Drake, a Protestant farmer who became a preacher, and Mary Mylwaye. Although of modest birth, his father was a tenant of Francis Russell, 2nd Earl of Bedford, who became a godfather to the boy and proved to be a useful ally later. In 1549, during the Prayer Book Rebellion, when Catholics turned on the supporters of the new Book of Common Prayer, which advanced the theology of the English Reformation, the puritan Drake family was forced to flee to Chatham in Kent on the river Medway, This was the site of the Royal Docks, a vast complex with 10,000 artisans working over 400 acres. For the 9-year-old boy it was a fascinating place full of ships being refitted, pine masts and planks being submerged to force the sap back into the wood, cannons being forged and sailors ready to share exotic stories. At 12 years old Drake enrolled as an apprentice member of the crew of a trading barque between the Thames and cross-channel ports.

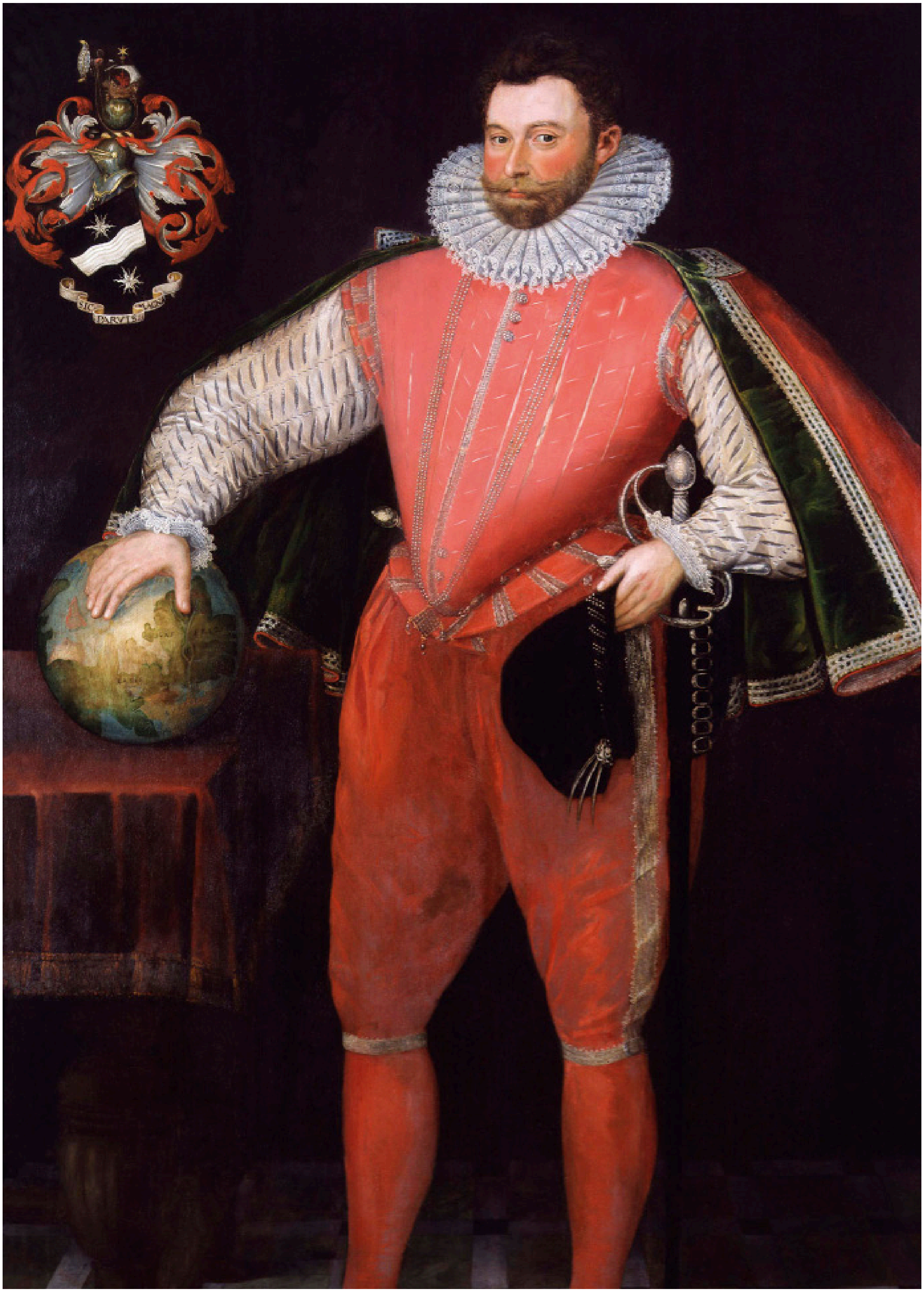
Drake became master of his own ship at 20 after his previous captain left him a boat in his will. At the age of 23, Drake sailed to the New World under his cousin, the experienced sailor Sir John Hawkins. They picked up slaves from the African coast and sold them in the West Indies, whilst hiding from the Spanish authorities because the English were forbidden by treaty from selling slaves to the Americas.

A later slaving trip by Hawkins and Drake, believed to have been secretly backed by Elizabeth, left Plymouth on 2nd October 1547 with six ships. With a cargo of African slaves, they coasted along the shores of North America selling them. The Spanish made life as difficult as possible for rogue traders like Hawkins. At the Spanish port of Rio Hacha, the locals refused to buy the slaves because of Spanish pressure. In retaliation, Hawkins and Drake attacked the town causing considerable damage before sailing to San Juan de Ulloa (Vera Cruz) for repairs.

Whilst in the port Hawkins and Drake were attacked by a fleet of 13 heavily armed Spanish ships under the command of Alvaro de Bazan. All the English ships were sunk with major loss of life except the Minion (100 tons) captained by Hawkins and the Judith (50 tons) captained by Drake. This engagement left Drake with a lifelong dislike of the Spanish, and led to a series of engagements, which culminated in the Spanish Armada and an attempted invasion of England.

In 1570 and 1571 Drake sailed to the Americas twice, crossing in around 25 days. He familiarised himself with the Caribbean and contacted local populations. He traded a little with the Indians and tried to establish the routes of the Spanish treasure train as it crossed the Isthmus of Panama to Nombre de Dios. He also studied the routes of the Spanish treasure ships.

In 1572, again with the covert backing of the Queen who commissioned Drake as a privateer, Drake and Hawkins set off with Drake’s two brothers Charles and John on a further trip. With a crew of 73 men they took two ships, the Pasha (70 tons) and the Swan (25 tons). Based out of a secret harbour in the Gulf of Darien, Drake attacked Nombre de Dios on 29th July 1572. Initially he captured the town, but then the Spanish arrived from Panama and the English had to retreat without their booty and Drake was severely wounded. They had lost a large quantity of silver bars and all the gold, pearls and jewels stored in the royal treasure house. Drake limped back to their safe harbour in Darien, which his sailors called Port Plenty because of the supplies they kept there. Both of Drake’s brothers were killed in action in separate engagements and he lost 28 men in one Spanish attack alone.


SIC PARVIS MAGNA

Sir Francis Drake by an unknown artist *c.* 1580.

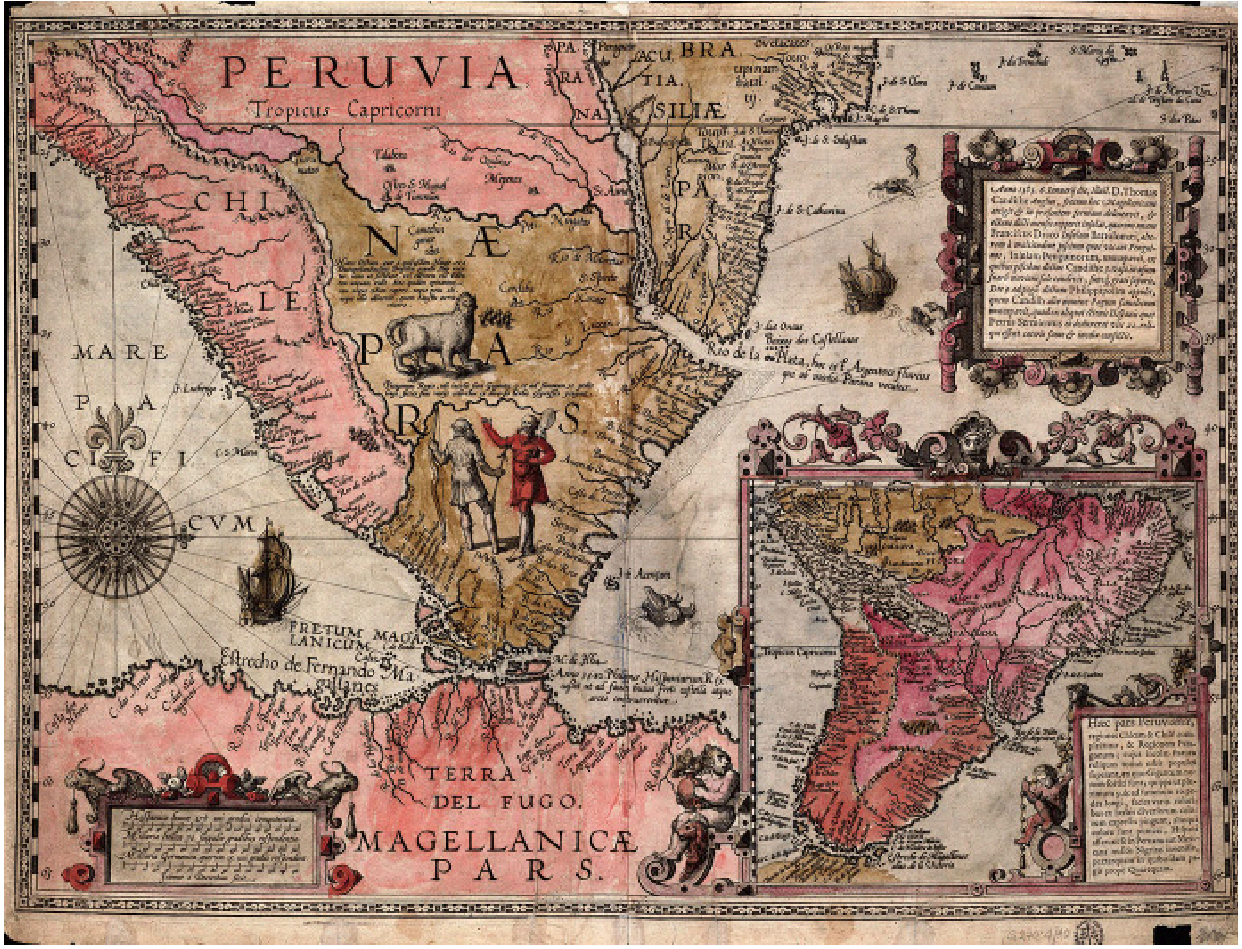
Drake's first raid on the gold train failed but he successfully raided Spanish galleons along the coast. In a second successful raid on the Spanish gold train, Drake befriended the local Cimarron population who told him that three pack trains of bullion with 190 mules each were scheduled to arrive at Nombre de Dios on 1st April 1573. Drake put together a force of 15 English men, 20 Frenchmen and some Cimarrons and landed near Nombre de Dios, setting up base in the jungle. He ambushed the mule train and captured a haul of treasure - so much that they had to leave behind 15 tons of silver bars. Drake gave his soldiers their fair share when they reached the ships before they sailed back to England. They arrived in Plymouth on 9th August 1573, and this trip established Drake's reputation in Elizabethan England. The Queen was delighted with her share of the treasure and immediately planned a larger expedition for Drake.

In 1577 Drake set sail with three ships and two supply ships with his friend Thomas Doughty. Elizabeth backed the expedition, as did the Earls of Rutland, Bedford and Shrewsbury, although they were all careful to leave no written details. It was 85 years since Columbus had discovered the Americas and the Spanish and Portuguese had had a virtual monopoly on the gold supply since.

On the first day the wind unleashed one of the worst storms in recorded history off the English coast. Drake set anchor in Falmouth harbour but his ship, the Pelican, began to drag anchor. Drake took the desperate action of cutting off the mainmast, which lightened and saved the ship. The ships returned to Plymouth to be refitted, and the backers complained about the costs, but the potential prize was too large for anyone to pull out.

Drake, Doughty and the third captain, John Winters, set sail again on 13th December 1577. The six ships consisted of the 18-gun, 100-ton *Pelican*, the 16-gun, 80-ton *Elizabeth*, the 10-gun, 30-ton *Mary Gold*, a 50-ton supply ship named the *Swan* and two further supply vessels. The crew of 164 survived another terrible storm off Brazil where they lost one of their ships but found her again later.

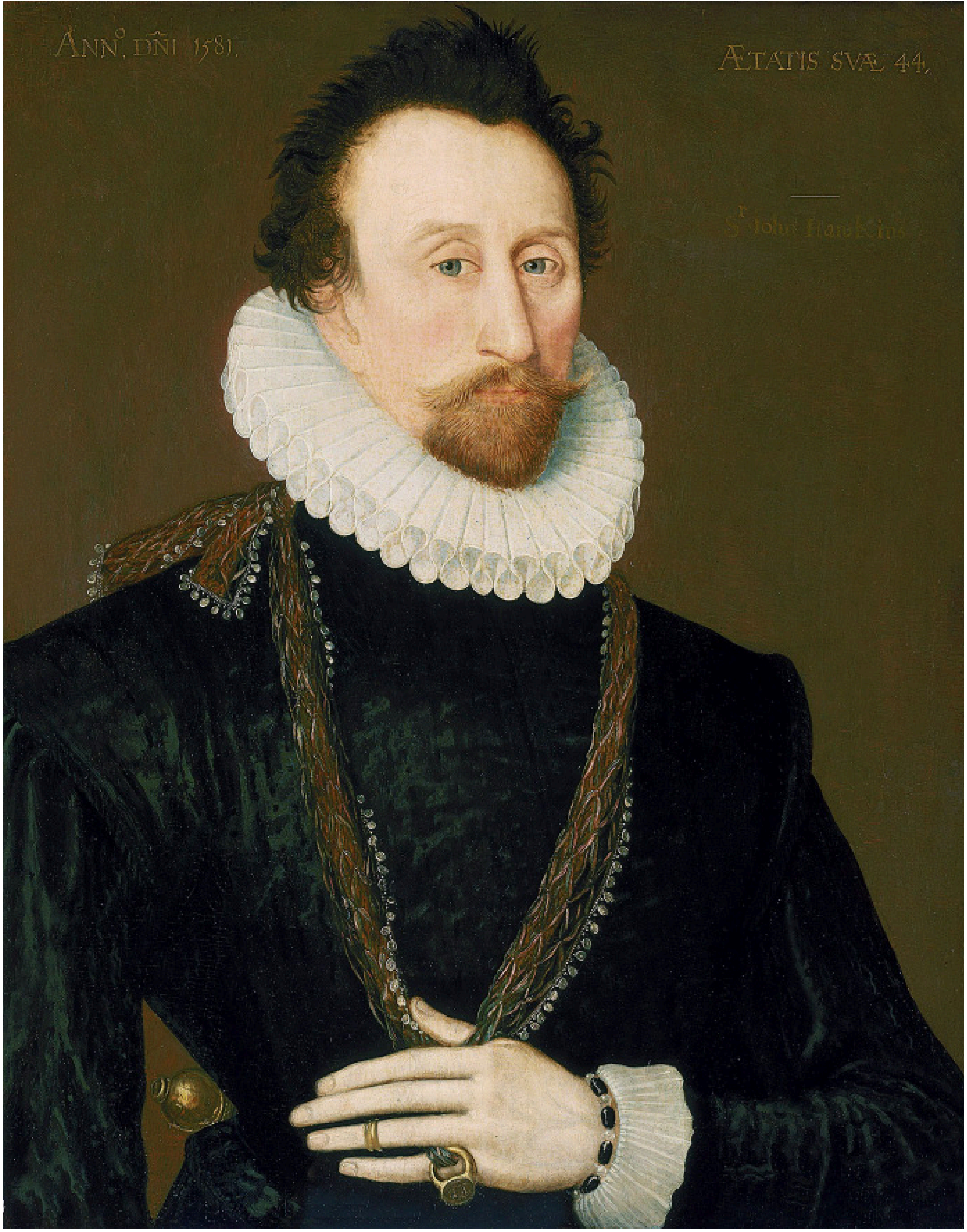
After poor weather and storms Thomas Doughty encouraged the men to mutiny against Drake. Drake responded by court-martialling him at Port St Julien and then beheading him. It was unusual for Drake to take a life outside combat. Unlike the Spanish, who cloaked their violent behaviour in the name of God, Drake was a strict Puritan and believed in mercy towards the vanquished. He held Christian services on his ships twice a day, even in inclement weather, to the dismay of his crew.


PERUVIA
Tropicus Capricorni
BRA SILIÆ
CHI LE
MARE PACIFICVM
FRETUM MAGALANICUM
Estrecho de Fernando Magallanes
Rio de la Plata
TERRA DEL FUGO.
MAGELLANICÆ PARS.

Map of the Straits of Magellan by Jan van Doetichum, circa 1590, the sea decorated with ships and sea monsters, land has an animal and giants. The west coast shows the new orientation established by Drake. This chart shows two versions of the cartography of South America. The main chart is on the authority of Thomas Cavendish while the inset, with considerable inland detail, is from Spanish sources.

Drake was ruthless in combat but quite genial out of it, even when with his enemy. The Spanish normally executed their prisoners, but Drake treated his prisoners well. He dined with them, extracting information from them about their sailing techniques and local knowledge before freeing them on the ship he had just raided. His Spanish adversaries admired him for this and nicknamed him *El Draque*, meaning ‘the Dragon’, derived from the Latin *draco* and was a pun on Drake. This admiration was not shared by the Spanish King Philip II, who placed a £10,000 bounty on Drake’s head, coincidentally the sum paid to Drake by Elizabeth for his later role in capturing the treasure of the *Cacafuego*.

Drake used his enemy’s navigational skills where he could. Capturing a Spanish ship, the *Mary* (formerly the *Santa Maria*) off the coast of Africa, he added its impressive Portuguese navigator, Nuno da Silva to his crew and built up a useful collection of Spanish maps.


ANNº. DÑI 1581.
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Sr John Hawkins

Sir John Hawkins (1532-95) by an unknown artist, (1581).

Drake's fleet suffered attrition from the storms. Due to the loss of men on the Atlantic crossing he scuttled the *Christopher* and the *Swan* and, after discovering the *Mary* was rotten when he docked at San Julien in Argentina, he burned it. After he killed Doughty, he changed the name of the *Pelican* to the *Golden Hind* in honour of Sir Christopher Hatton and his crest, which contained a golden hind. Hatton was a contemporary of Drake, having been born in 1540 and, like Drake, was a commoner who rose to the top of Elizabethan England. Good looking, charming, and an excellent dancer he was reputed to be Queen Elizabeth's lover. He became Lord Chancellor in 1587 and one of the richest men in England. Hatton supported Drake and part-financed several of his voyages including this trip on which he made a profit of £2300.

Drake pushed through the Magellan Strait between the 20th August and 6th September 1578. The strait, at the southern tip of South America, had been discovered by the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan in 1520. Around 570 km long, it is a notoriously difficult passage being only 2 km wide at its narrowest point at Carlos III Island. As they passed Tierra Del Fuego, they found some Indians who gave them food and water. Drake arrived at the Pacific and lost one of his remaining ships in a bad storm. Another was badly damaged and returned to England, leaving just the Golden Hind. After this passage the Golden Hind was pushed south and probably reached a latitude of 55 degrees along the Chilean Coast. It is not now believed that he reached Cape Horn or the so-called Drake Passage.

Drake then sailed north along the Pacific coast of South America attacking Spanish ports at Valparaiso, Lima and Arica and various ships. Near Lima he captured a Spanish ship with 25,000 pesos of Peruvian gold, amounting very roughly to £7m in today's money.

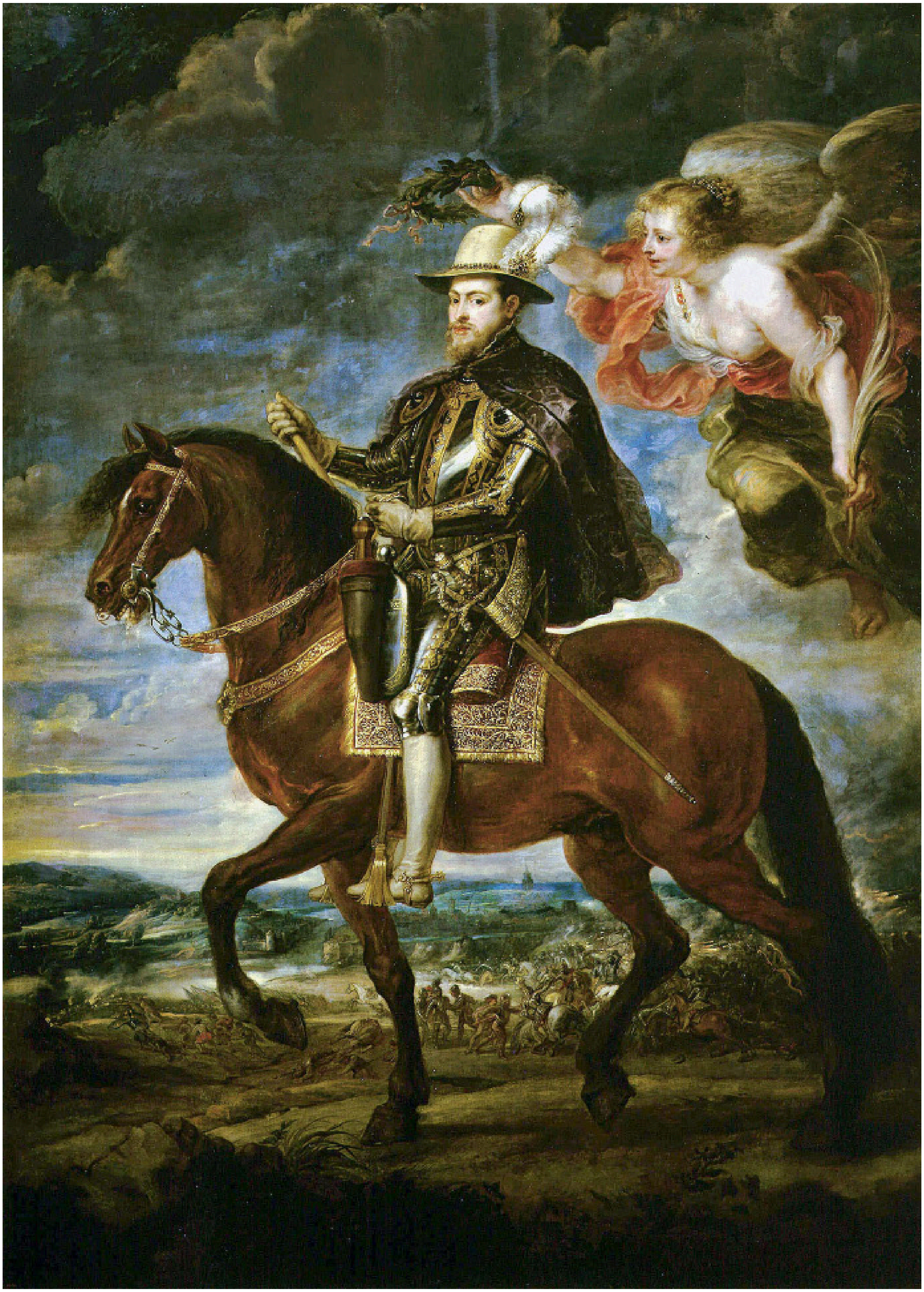
Drake also heard that the treasure-laden *Nuestra Senora de la Concepcion*, better known as the *Cacafuego*, was nearby. Drake found the *Cacafuego* already in the harbour at Panama. He immediately entered the harbour with between 60 and 80 men, but a customs officer saw the cannons on the *Golden Hind* and he had to cut his anchor and fight his way out.

Two weeks later on 1st March 1579 Drake found the *Cacafuego* again out in open sea near Esmeraldas in Ecuador and followed it. It was midday and he did not want to attack before dark. He was afraid that reducing sail would arouse suspicion so, to slow down the *Golden Hind* and confuse the Spanish about her potential speed, he trailed wine pots filled with water. At nightfall, he overtook the *Cacafuego*, who presumed he was another Spanish vessel, and sent aboard a raiding party. The Spanish captain, San Juan de Anton, was wounded by an arrow and surrendered.

Drake then led the captured galleon out to sea. The amount of treasure was the greatest ever seen in Elizabethan England and it took 4 days to search the ship and empty it. Neither Elizabeth nor Drake ever discussed how much treasure was removed but it was at least 36 kg of gold, a golden crucifix, jewels, 13 chests of silver plate and coins and 26 tons of silver. In addition, Spanish merchants in Seville claimed there was a further 400,000 pesos of gold aboard that had not been registered with the Spanish Crown.

This catch told the world that the Spanish were active in the Far East, a concession that had been awarded exclusively to the Portuguese by the Pope in Rome. The ensuing diplomatic row forced Philip II of Spain to invade Portugal in 1580 and claim the crown.

Drake dined with the captured officers and set them and their crew free with their ship on 6th March, giving them each a gift related to their rank. With the entire fleet of Spain now looking for him in the Atlantic and the Caribbean, Drake decided to return by the east, but first headed north up the American coast. He discovered California and named it New Albion, claiming the land for England. Albion was an ancient Roman name for England deriving from the white (*alba*) cliffs of Dover. Drake landed at a secret port to repair his vessels and restock. All first-hand records of the voyage, including logs, maps and charts, were destroyed in the Whitehall Palace fire of 1698. It was probably in the San Francisco area, and the major east-west highway in Marin County California is today named Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. He remained there for a month repairing the *Golden Hind* and resting his crew for the journey east where no Englishman had ever sailed before and for which he had no maps.



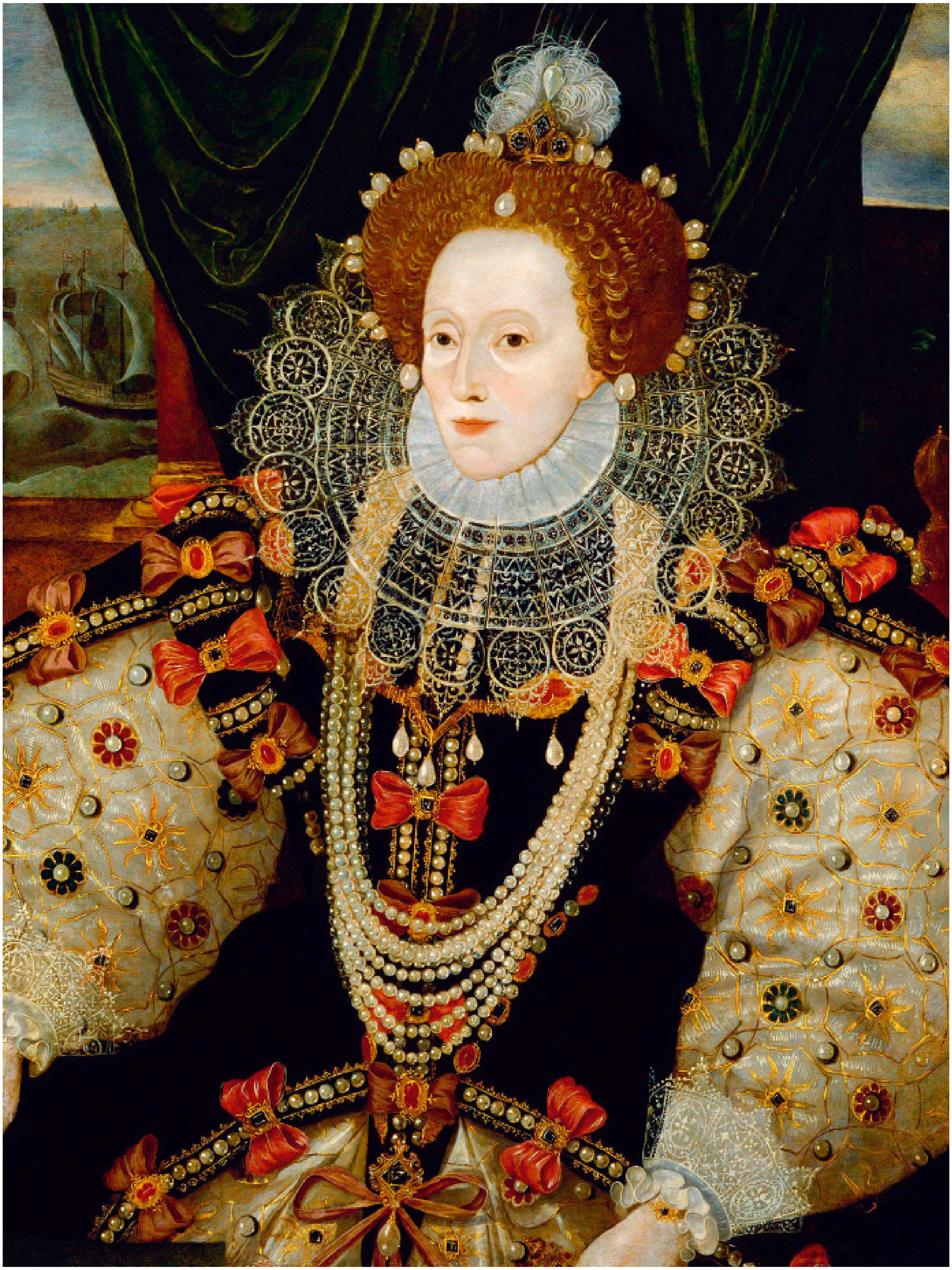
Philip II of Spain (1527-98) by Sir Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).

Drake went north as far as Vancouver Island probably looking for the Northwest Passage before leaving across the Pacific on 23rd July 1579. On 16th October he sighted land in the Philippines and on 3rd November arrived at Ternate in the East Indies, where he made a trade treaty with the sultan and bought a cargo of cloves. On 9th January 1580 the *Golden Hind* struck a reef and Drake had to jettison half the cloves. After 3 days the ship freed itself, and he sailed on to Java before crossing the Indian Ocean. He made multiple stops around Africa before rounding the Cape of Good Hope and reaching Sierra Leone on 22nd July 1580.

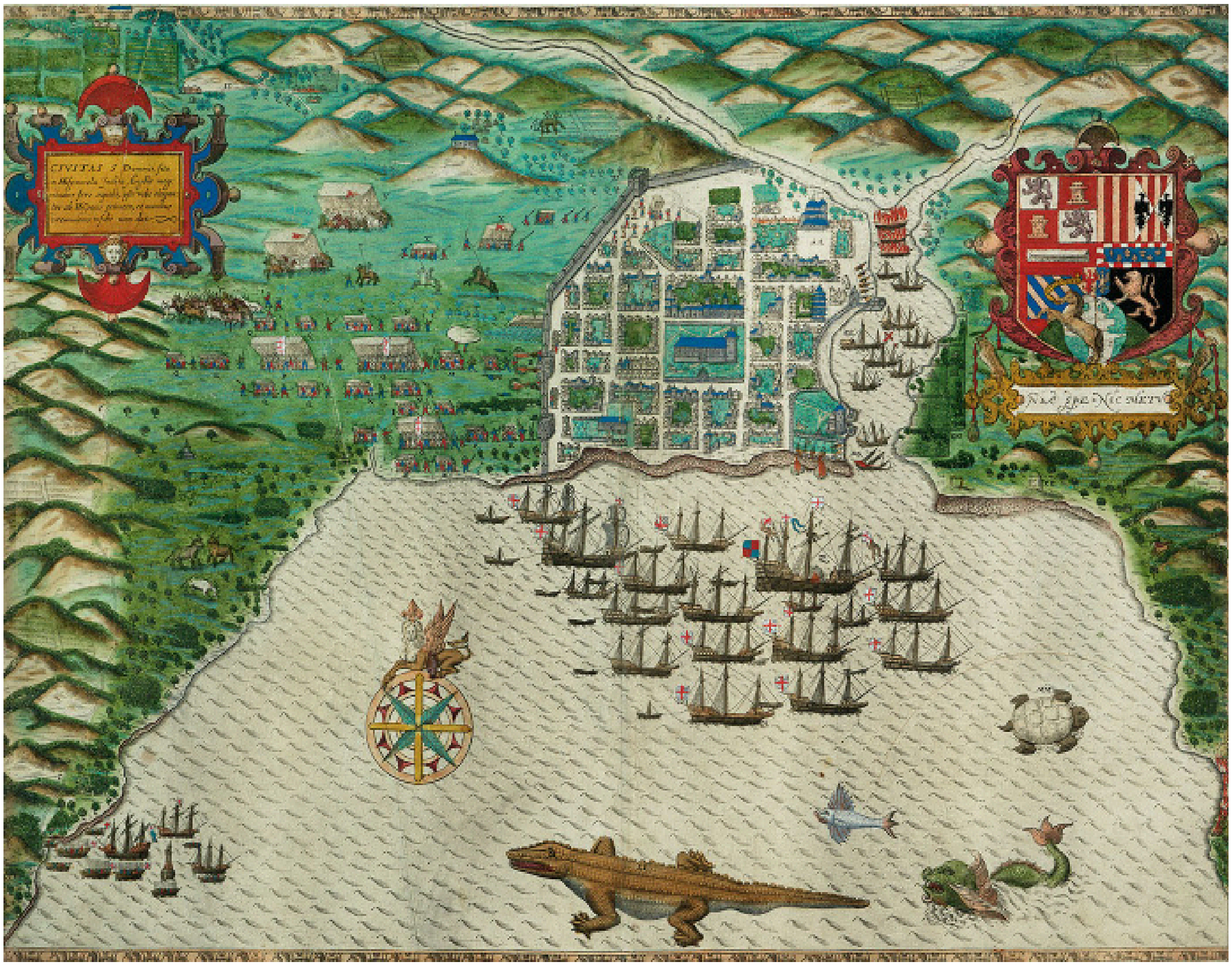
On 26th September Drake moored off Plymouth with 59 men remaining after a 3-year expedition, the first Englishmen to circumnavigate the world. There was no public celebration of his return in order not to antagonise Philip of Spain. The Queen knighted him aboard the *Golden Hind* on 4th April 1581 and made him Mayor of Plymouth. Because of friction with Spain, Elizabeth handed the sword to the Marquis de Marchaumont, ambassador from France, and asked him to knight Drake.

Drake informed the Queen and his investors that the return on their initial investment was 4600 % (£46 for every £1 invested). The Queen rapidly removed her share, which was half of the total treasure, and swore Drake and the other investors to secrecy on pain of death over the amount of treasure. However, the economist J. M. Keynes estimates that the entire English foreign debt was paid off from the Queen's proceeds and there was enough left over (£42,000) for her to capitalise a new venture, the Levant company, which played a crucial role in the development of foreign trade.[2]

Drake presented the Queen with a jewel token in the shape of a ship with an ebony hull and enamelled gold rigging with a fine African diamond. In return, the Queen gave Drake a jewel with her portrait, one that Drake holds proudly in his portrait executed by Marcus Gheeraerts in 1591. On one side is a state portrait of Elizabeth by the miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard, who also later painted Drake. On the other side of the sardonyx, there is a cameo of double portrait busts, a regal woman and an African male. The 'Drake Jewel', is a rare documented survivor among sixteenth-century jewels and it is currently housed in the British Galleries of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



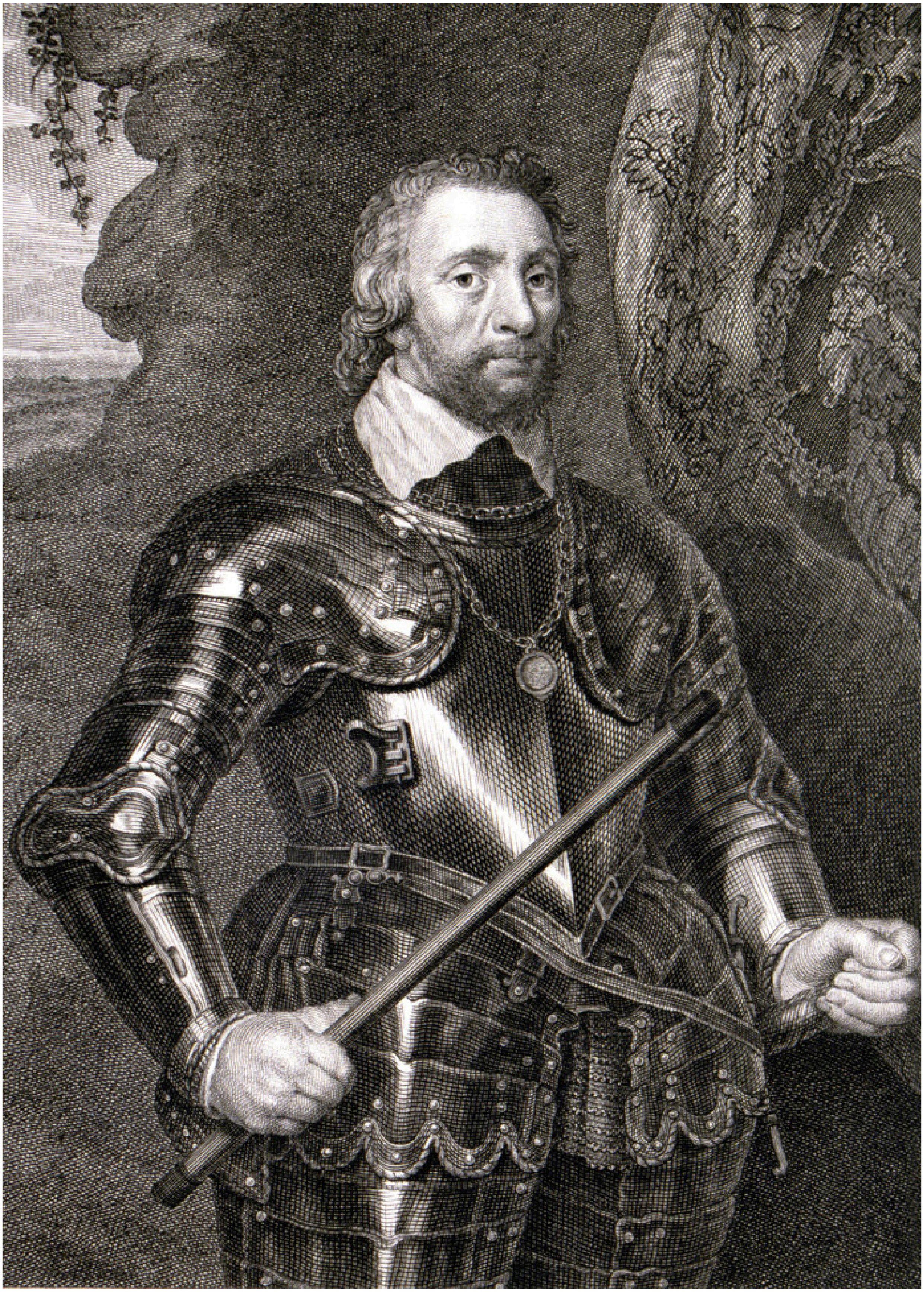
***Queen Elizabeth I* (1533-1603), attributed to George Gower (*c.* 1588).**



Map illustrating Drake's attack on Santo Domingo. Features and incidents of Drake's attack on the town were identified in a key, printed separately. The sea area is decorated with local wildlife including a crocodile, a flying fish and a turtle. One of four charts drawn to accompany Walter Bigges' *Expeditio Francisci Draki*, published in 1588.

It is known that Drake kept £10,000 for himself and distributed another £8,000 between his crew. The Queen took her share to the Tower of London and the Tower still held 12 tons of silver and 100 pounds of gold in December 1585 - a fraction of the original amount. In 1580 Drake acquired Buckland Abbey, a Cistercian abbey near Yelverton in Devon, converted to a residence by Sir Richard Grenville after the dissolution of the monasteries. Drake lived in the house for 15 years and it passed down his family by descent until 1946. It now belongs to the National Trust.

Drake also started speculating in property from 1581 and, with the help of his powerful godfather, Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, who was Lord Lieutenant of Devon and Cornwall, he was elected to parliament in 1584. He lost his seat in 1586 because of Bedford's death and then planned a further expedition to the Caribbean. The Queen and a powerful collection of men from the court and peerage backed him. The Earls of Rutland, Shrewsbury and Bedford were involved and Shrewsbury supplied the *Talbot*. Leicester provided the *Leicester*, Sir William Winter the *Sea Dragon* and the Hawkins brothers the *Bark Bond* and the *Hope*.



Don Alfonso (1550-1615) 7th Duke of Medina Sidonia, Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish Armada. Spanish School, 16th-century.

War had broken out with Spain in 1585 and Drake sailed in 1586 sacking the ports of Santo Domingo and Cartagena, capturing both and holding them to ransom. He wanted to take Panama but an epidemic reduced his crew. On the return leg he captured the Spanish fort of San Augustin in Spanish Florida. This expedition was not so productive of loot, but it damaged Spanish interests and raised English prestige.

These attacks, along with the Queen beheading the Catholic Mary of Scotland in February 1587, persuaded Philip II of Spain to invade England and he began assembling his fleet in Portugal.

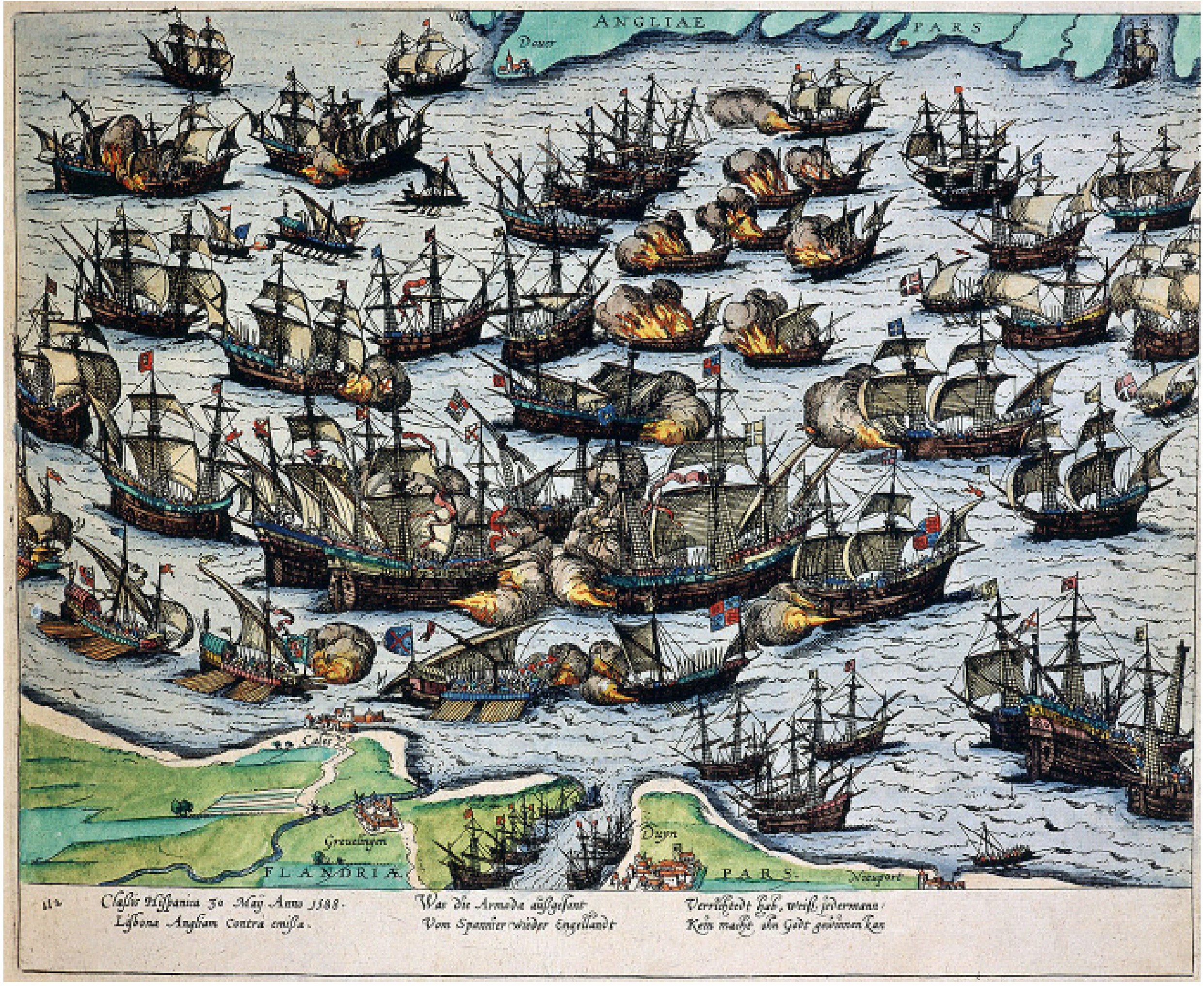
Elizabeth appointed Lord Charles Howard of Effingham commander of her fleet and gave Drake, Hawkins and Martin Frobisher immediately subordinate posts. Drake launched an attack on the Spanish ports of Cadiz and Coruna, famously observing he had, ‘singed the beard of the King of Spain.’ At Cadiz he destroyed 37 merchant and naval vessels. Mothers in the Cadiz region still say to their children, ‘El Draque will get you if you are not good.’

Drake lingered three more days in Cadiz, removing 2900 pipes of wine. This developed a taste for sherry amongst the English nobility. The attack delayed the Spanish fleet for a year and Drake spent the next months patrolling the Iberian coast between Lisbon and Cape St Vincent, intercepting and destroying Spanish supply lines. Drake estimated he captured 1600-1700 tons of barrel staves, enough to make 25,000 to 30,000 barrels for containing provisions. The Spanish then had to use inferior wood for their barrels for the invasion, which rotted and caused disease among their sailors. Drake also occupied the Portuguese port of Sagres for a while and in the Azores he seized a large Portuguese vessel with a rich cargo on route back from Goa in India.

Supported by Pope Sixtus V, who treated the invasion as a crusade, Philip II appointed the Duke of Medina Sidonia commander. Medina sailed from Lisbon in May 1588 with 22 Spanish warships and 108 converted merchant vessels. The plan was to meet up with the Duke of Parma’s 30,000 soldiers in Flanders and invade England.

The English fleet outnumbered the Spanish with 200 ships as opposed to 130 and its available firepower was 50% higher. In the words of Geoffrey Palmer, by 1588, ‘the capital ships of the Elizabethan navy constituted the most powerful battle fleet anywhere in the world.’[3] The English fleet consisted of 34 ships of the Royal Fleet, 24 of which were 200-400 tons and 163 other ships of a similar size, which carried up to 50 guns each. Twelve of these ships belonged privately to Howard, Hawkins and Drake.

When the action started, Howard ceded control to his Vice Admiral Drake. The boy who had gone to sea aged 12 was now in charge of the British Navy with the largest fleet ever assembled, supported by an army of 55,000 men.. When Drake was advised the Spanish Fleet was approaching the story (probably apocryphal) goes he was playing bowls and insisted on finishing his game (knowing full well the English fleet could not leave Plymouth harbour on the ebbing tide).


ANGLIAE PARS
Dover
Calais
Greuelingen
FLANDRIÆ PARS
Duyn
Nieuport
Classis Hispanica 30 May Anno 1588
Lisbona Angliam Contra emissa.
Was die Armada außgesant
Vom Spannier wider Engellandt
Verrichtedt hab, weiß jedermann:
Kein macht ohn Godt gewinnen kan

Defeat of the Spanish Armada off Plymouth, England, 30 May 1588, from an engraving by Hogenberg, late 16th-century.

That evening, with the English fleet trapped in Plymouth, presented the best opportunity for Medina but, despite the advice of his captains, he fatally prevaricated and turned towards the Isle of Wight. When the tide turned, Drake set off in pursuit with 55 ships. Two Spanish ships were damaged in accidents, the *Rosario* and the *San Salvador* and contemporary accounts detail that Drake, unable to resist such a prize, broke with his formation to round them up. Typical of Drake's luck, the Rosario was under command of a full admiral, Pedro de Valdes, and contained substantial funds to pay the waiting army in the Low Countries.

Drake tried to pincer the Spanish fleet with him attacking from the south and Frobisher from the north but Medina cut away and took up a defensive formation off Calais whilst looking to unite with Parma's army. That night Drake set alight eight fire ships and sailed them into the Spanish formation. The ships were regular warships that he had sacrificed and filled with pitch, tar, brimstone and gunpowder, but the Spanish feared they were specialised gun-ships with large gunpowder magazines, like those that had been used with deadly effect at the siege of Antwerp.

Medina's flagship and the principal warships held firm but the majority of the Spanish cut their anchors in panic and headed out for open sea. Drake had drilled his men for fast reloading and he kept his ships from engaging and fired volley after volley with the cannons, trying to hit the galleons below the water line. He had worked out that the reinforced oak of the new Spanish warships meant his cannon had to be very close to be effective.

The English kept firing broadsides until they had severely damaged some of the Spanish ships before sending out boarding parties. Five Spanish ships were sunk. The *San Lorenzo* ran aground at Calais and was taken by Howard after intense combat between the crew, the slaves and the Spanish and English soldiers. The San Felipe and the San Mateo ran aground the next day on the island of Walcheren and were captured by the Dutch. Two smaller vessels sank. This became known as the battle of Gravelines.

Medina gave up his plan to unite with Parma's army and ran for the cover of open sea. Because of a prevailing southerly wind he was forced to turn north up the English Channel and sailed into the North Sea hotly pursued by Drake. The Earl of Leicester maintained an army of 4000 soldiers at West Tilbury, Essex, to defend the River Thames just in case Parma managed somehow to cross. Elizabeth visited the troops there on 8th August, giving a famous speech:

> I am come amongst you as you see at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the middle of heat and battle, to live or die amongst you all - to lay down for my God, and my kingdoms, and for my people, my honor and my blood even in the dust.

> I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the stomach of a king - and a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm.[4]

Drake harassed the Spanish as far north as the Firth of Forth in Scotland. The Spanish sailed around Scotland and Ireland into the North Atlantic. They desperately tried to shore up their damaged ships by tying rope and cables around them. Many had lost their anchors when they cut them to escape in haste at Calais, so they could not rest anywhere. As food and water ran short, they threw their cavalry horses overboard. Although they intended to keep well west of the Irish and Scottish coasts, they had little experience of sailing the Gulf Stream and it swept them east and north. Powerful westerlies and the freezing cold weather of the 'Little Ice Age'[5] compounded the problem and many of the ships ran aground.

At least 5,000 Spanish sailors died from hypothermia, drowning, starvation or during combat. Only 67 ships managed to return to Spain and many more men died on arrival on hospital ships or in Spanish harbours from disease or malnutrition. When Philip II learnt of the disaster he said, 'I sent the Armada against men, not God's winds and waves,'[6] but he forgave the Duke of Medina Sidonia. English losses were relatively few; they didn't lose a ship but after the victory dysentery, hunger and typhus killed an estimated 6,000-8,000 troops and sailors. A demoralising dispute caused by the government's fiscal shortfalls left many of the victorious servicemen without pay for several months and the losing Spanish were actually much better cared for by their king.

Drake's later career proved anticlimactic. A national hero, immensely rich, feted by his Queen and in possession of an extensive country estate and manor at Buckland Abbey, he should have settled into comfortable retirement. However, the Queen said she needed him to stay on active duty and Drake was too used to sailing, piracy and warfare to retire.

Warfare is a young man's game and with age Drake abandoned his previous tactics of lightning-quick and aggressive raids to catch the enemy by surprise. In 1589 Elizabeth gave Drake and Sir John Norreys three principal tasks. They were to take the Azores, harass and capture Spanish shipping and to support the rebels in Lisbon against Philip II. Although Drake and Norreys destroyed a few ships in the harbour of La Coruna, they lost more than 20 ships and 12,000 lives and Drake suffered his first major defeat. At Lisbon, Drake‘s cautious refusal to sail up the Tagus River for a naval bombardment led to further losses.

For the next five years Drake concerned himself with improving his estate, sitting in Parliament and dealing with Plymouth matters. In 1595 Elizabeth thought she could end the war by cutting off the flow of Spanish gold from the Isthmus of Panama. She asked Drake (now in his 50s) and Hawkins (now 63) to undertake one final expedition. Ever loyal to Elizabeth and perhaps missing the adventures of the sea, he agreed. However, Hawkins was as cautious as Drake was bold, even in his later years, and the two found it difficult to work together. The Queen compounded this by giving them joint command and specifying they needed to be back in six months, which gave little time for a meaningful campaign.

Drake learned of a crippled Spanish treasure ship in San Juan, Puerta Rico and decided to go there. Because of first visiting the Canary Islands, their destination was revealed to the Spanish, who sent word ahead to Puerto Rico. Hawkins died as they reached the island, leaving Drake in command. The Spanish had strengthened their defences and Drake failed to take the city. Ignoring the Queen's six-month limit, the ageing Drake headed for Nombre de Dios and then Panama. He easily took Nombre de Dios, not knowing it had been superseded by Puerta Bello as the Spaniard's Caribbean gold and silver terminal. His landing party were soon ambushed by the Spanish and forced to retreat.

Drake cruised aimlessly to Honduras and back before falling ill with dysentery. He died on 28th January 1596 at the age of 56 while moored off Puerta Bello in Panama and was buried in a lead coffin at sea.

A day before he died he dictated a codicil to his will, which in its direct language gives a feel for the man:

> *In the Name of God, Amen. The seaven and twenteth day of Januarie the eighth and thirtieth yere of the Raigne of Our Soveraigne Ladie Elizabeth by the Grace of God of England, Frannce and Irelande Queene, Defender of the Faith, etc.:*
>
> *I, Frauncis Drake, of Buckland and Monathorn, in the Countie of Devon, Knight, Generall of Her Majesties Fleete, now in service for the West Indyes, beinge perfect of minde and memorie (Thankes be therefore unto God), although sicke in bodie, doe make and ordaine my last Will and Testament in manner and form followinge, viz.: First. I commend my soul to Jesus Christ my Savior and Redeemer, in whose*

righteousness I am made assured of everlastinge felicitie, and my bodie to the earth to be entombed at the discretion of my executor.[7].

Without children from either of his two marriages, he left his estates and fortune mainly to his brother Thomas and his cousin Francis.

Drake's exploits have entered European folklore particularly in England and Spain. The boy who cut his teeth on the slavers, and became a pirate before entering the service of the Queen, ended up Vice Admiral of the English fleet. Undefeated until aged over 50 he survived numerous battles and consistently out-sailed his adversaries. He amassed a considerable fortune, was the only commoner in Elizabeth's private circle except Sir Christopher Hatton and conducted business with the tycoons of his day. In England, however, he is best remembered for his role in warding off the only attempted naval invasion since William the Conqueror in 1066. In the history of English looting and piracy he remains exceptional.

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1 Kelsey, Harry, Sir Francis Drake, *The Queen's Pirate,* Yale University Press, New Haven, 1998. Although the story was popular at the time there were no eyewitnesses and it didn't appear in print until 37 years after the event, so is probably apocryphal.

2 Keynes, J.M., *Treatise on Money and the General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money,* 1924-1939.

3 Palmer, Geoffrey, 'The Dreadnought Revolution of Tudor England', *Mariner's Mirror,* 82, 1996, p. 273.

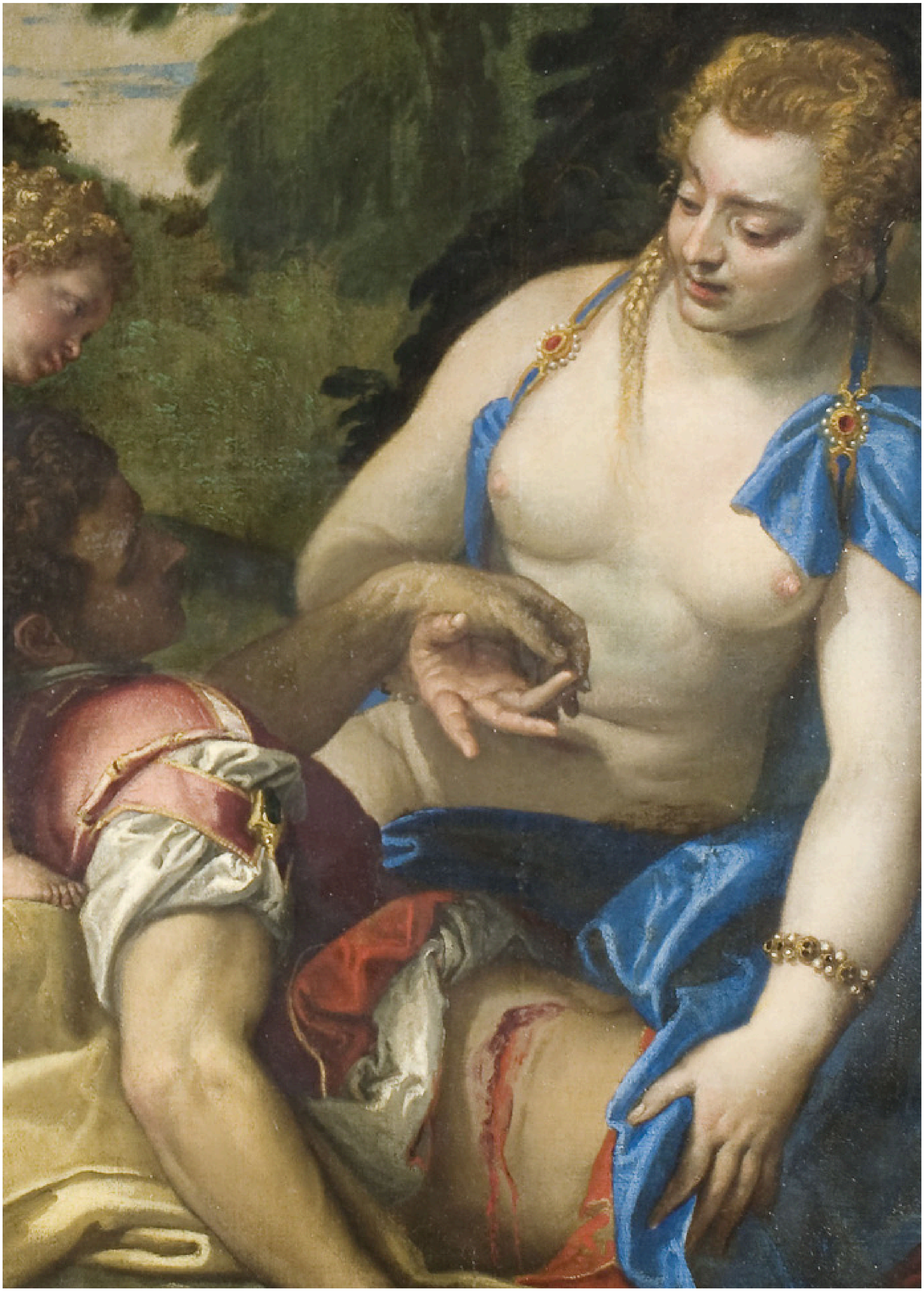
4 Marcus, Leah S., Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose (eds.), *Elizabeth I: Collected Works,* University of Chicago Press, 2000.

5 Fagan, Brian, *The Little Ice Age, How Climate Made History,* 1300-1850, Basic Books, New York, 2000.

6 Spark Notes: Queen Elizabeth - Against the Spanish Armada, www.sparknotes.com/biography/elizabeth/section8.rhtml.

7 *Captain Sir Francis Drake,* www.tudorplace.com.ar/Bios/FrancisDrake.htm.

6 - The emergence of Sweden



Detail of *Venus Mourning Adonis* by Paolo Veronese (1528-1588).

Gustavus Adolphus and Queen Christina and the sack of Prague

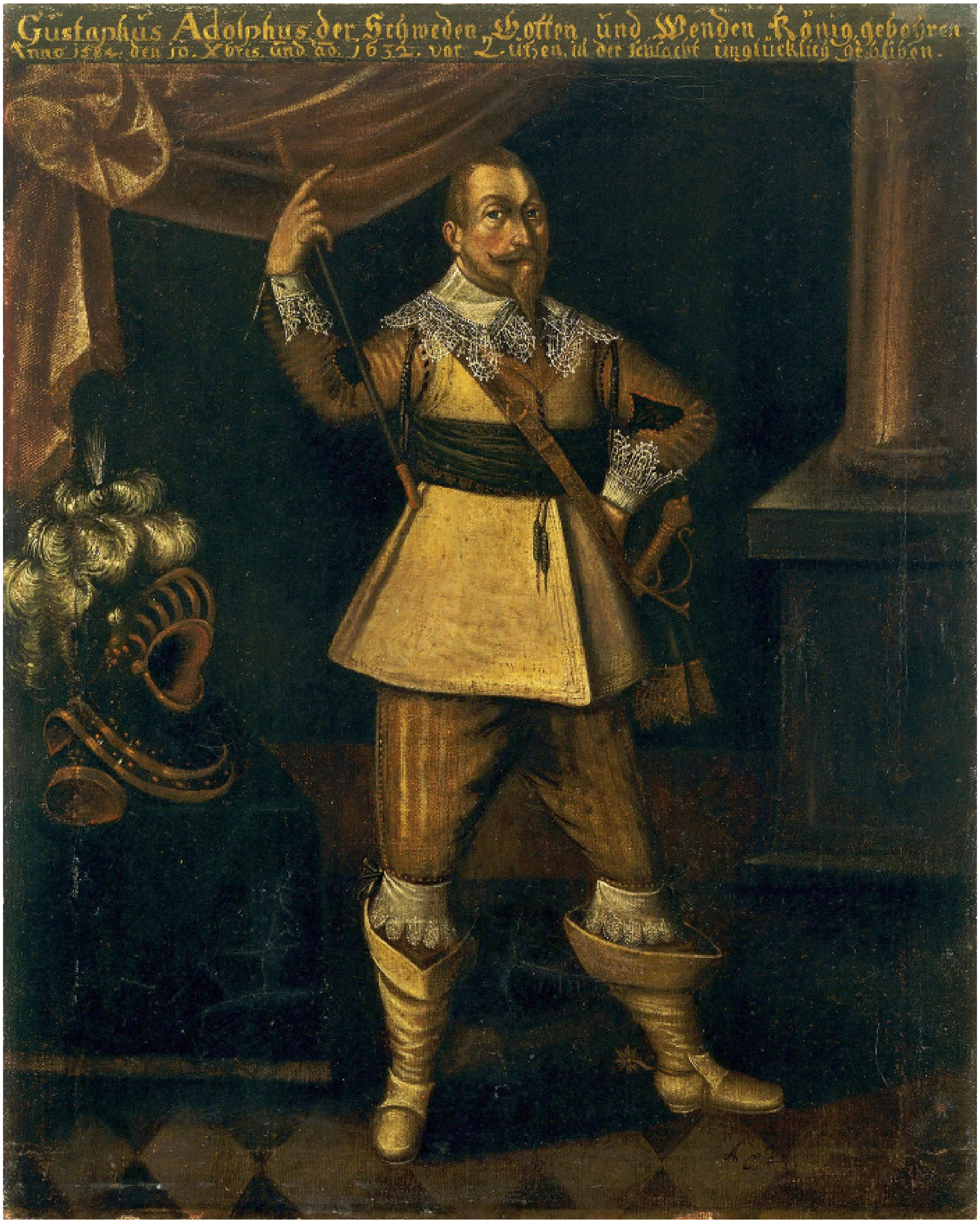
> ‘Do not forget to procure and send me the library and rarities there in Prague... These, as you know, are all I really care about.’
>
> - Queen Christina of Sweden to the commander of the Swedish army, General Kristof von Konigsmarck, before the sack of Prague in 1648.[1]

Until the sixteenth century looting had been for gold, but in the seventeenth century, interest also developed in stealing books for learning and art for prestige. Art had become much more valuable in the late sixteenth century, high prices being achieved for the leading Renaissance artists. Painters such as Leonardo, Titian and Michelangelo in the south, and Cranach and Dürer in the north, were expensive and much sought after by the aristocracy and kings of Europe.

As art increased in price the value attached to its ownership also increased. Gold was heavy and cumbersome to move, but was useful for paying expenses such as soldiers’ wages. Art could also be sold, but when looted was more often kept for the prestige and culture it bestowed on its owner. Art could also be used as a gift.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century Sweden became a premier looting nation - during a period known as the Swedish Empire, which started with the ascent of the 17-year-old Gustav Adolf II (1594-1632), better known by the Latinised name Gustavus Adolphus, to the Swedish throne in 1611 and lasted through the reigns of Christina (1632-1654) and Charles X (1654-1660), ending in the death of Charles XI (born 1655) in 1697.

In 1600 Sweden was still a provincial backwater isolated on the far north of Europe. Visitors to Stockholm reported that it was a small wooden town with little culture and had remnants of pagan Viking beliefs underpinning its Protestant faith. Sweden’s borders circled the Baltic Sea, running up the Swedish coast and around today’s Finland down as far as modern Helsinki.

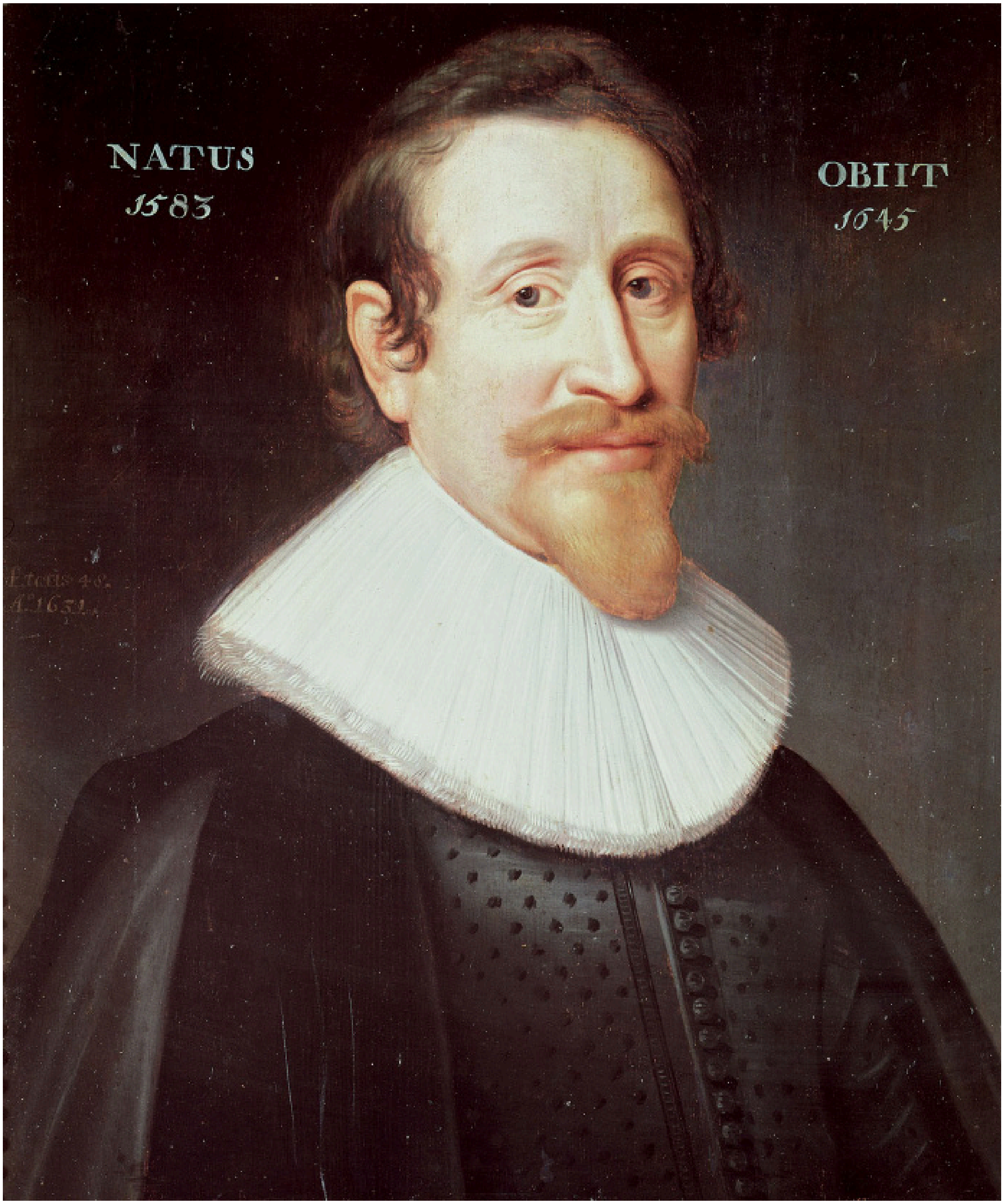

Gustaphus Adolphus der Schweden Gotten und Wenden König gebohren
Anno 1594. den 10. Xbris. und ao. 1632. vor Lützen. in der schlacht unglücklich geblieben.

Gustavus Adolphus II, King of Sweden (1594-1632), by unknown artist.

By the time Gustavus Adolphus, known as the ‘Golden King’ or the ‘Lion of the North’ died in 1632 Sweden was one of the most powerful countries in Europe and her border stretched west to the Norwegian sea, incorporating territory in the Baltic states and pockets of Poland and northern Germany. Gustavus and his three descendants filled the libraries, churches and castles of Sweden with loot from their conquests of Poland, Germany and the Baltic states.

Present-day Sweden, a country that has not been involved in war for 200 years, finally addressed the looting issue in 2007/8 by mounting an exhibition entitled *War Booty* at the Royal Armoury in Stockholm in order to: encourage transparency, help develop, ‘a network for future research and cooperation’ and generate, ‘further understanding and knowledge of war booty in European collections.’[2]. The exhibition catalogue states that, according to international law at the time, the victor had the right to keep the property of a defeated enemy.

Curators add that it would be illegal to apply current law to the past, that was governed by different law. They quote the principles of Hugo Grotius laid down in 1625 in *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (On the Laws of War and Peace). Grotius (1583-1645) codified international law, made warfare part of a legal system and maintained that every belligerent country could lay claim to war booty on condition that it had been in the victor’s possession for 24 hours. However, clear title only passed to the victor when the object in question had been taken back to his own territory. In addition, the conqueror was allowed to remove the property of his enemies’ subjects. Grotius deemed it was fair to remove war booty because it was the common form of payment at the time for allied states and armies. These were the principles that guided warfare at that date and under which Sweden legally removed her treasures (according to the Swedish curators).



Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) by Michiel Jansz. van Miereveld (1567-1641). Ambassador to the court of James I, he escaped in a trunk of books in 1621.

They also add that the 1648 Peace of Westphalia stipulated a, ‘perpetual oblivion’, that no further claims on the return of war booty could be made after that date on items looted before it. The exhibition also tries to differentiate between war booty and trophies. Trophies are items without which the enemy cannot fight such as military insignia, musical instruments, arms, armour, weapons, cannon, etc., which even today are considered legitimate when taken after a battle, whereas war booty is the plundering of gold, books or art belonging to the enemy.

The exhibition displays an extensive haul of loot mainly from Poland, Denmark and Lithuania, incorporating majolica from Emperor Rudolf's treasury, cavalry helmets and vambraces from the Polish cavalry, shields from Persia, Turkey and Italy and the exquisite inlaid conical helmet of Tsar Ivan the Terrible (which had been earlier looted by the Poles from Russia). The Swedes are careful not to exhibit anything looted after 1815 (the last item being Napoleon's red portfolio for newspapers and documents found by the Swedes after the battle of Leipzig in 1813), which was when a treaty signed at the Congress of Vienna made looting a war crime.

Such legal distinctions were of little interest to Gustavus Adolphus. His father, Charles IX, had trained him for the crown, with military leadership a priority. In 1608 the King imported Jakob De la Gardie to tutor the boy and he commented that the boy talked, 'almost incessantly about other peoples' wars, battles, sieges, the art of war on land and water, shipping and sea travel.'[3] A Dutchman described him as being of, 'lofty stature, of finely proportioned build, with a fair complexion, long face, blond hair, and pointed beard of an almost golden hue.'[4] In later life the hair became golden and beard reddish and, despite his active lifestyle, he became corpulent.

An engraving of 1616 confirms the elongated face, large eyes and hooked nose which gave him the nickname 'Gösta'. Nearsightedness is believed to have caused his death when he charged the wrong way in the fog and straight into the enemy guns at the battle of Lutzen. A devout Lutheran, he was clever, disciplined and determined but also passionate, as his love affairs with Ebba Brahe and Margareta Slots demonstrate. He was not without a sense of humour and remarked on his marriage to Eleanor of Brandenberg in 1620 that it was his first victory on German soil.

On his accession the 17-year-old Gustavus Adolphus inherited war with Poland, his main army away fighting in Russia and a Danish army advancing deep into Sweden. Sweden was in a parlous state, nearly bankrupt and the population on the verge of revolt. He was concerned about the state of his military. Johan of Nassau said of the Swedish military in 1601, 'The Swedish cavalry in general is badly equipped, having no armour; the foot is badly clothed and armed, in fact not having a single pike in use or in possession and being mere farmers.'[5]

Gustavus immediately started to reform the army, introducing: conscription to replace the foreign mercenaries, paper cartridges, standardisation of artillery calibres, smaller mobile cannon, and tactical innovations such as dashing cavalry charges, firing in volleys, offensive infantry formations and close artillery support from regimental level light artillery. He reduced his infantry companies from eight ranks to six deep and published a tract in 1621 on his *Articles of War*, in which he said he was determined to stamp out, 'the insignificant military discipline and order that have hitherto been tolerated.'[6]

Gustavus turned his attention to the advancing Danes, and concluded a peace with them in 1613 by buying them off with a payment of one million riksdaler over 6 years and giving up all claims to certain disputed Arctic regions. From 1613 to 1617 Gustavus fought the Russians before defeating them, cutting off their access to the Baltic and adding to Swedish territory. Eight more years of fighting resulted in the defeat of Poland and the addition of Swedish territory in the south and eastern Baltic. Gustavus was an excellent general, later studied by Napoleon and Clausewitz. He instituted permanent units, with a fixed chain of command, and established a philosophy of co-operation among units of cavalry, infantry and artillery.

Gustavus emptied captured libraries, treasuries and palaces of all their art and books. At the time there was only one library in Sweden, at Uppsala University, and only one printing press. He emptied the Jesuit Monastery in Riga in 1621, followed by the evacuation of hundreds of small and large libraries to Sweden. The king said that emptying Jesuit libraries gave him particular pleasure and the Jesuits loathed him in equal measure, calling him a 'litter of vipers'.

Lars Munkhammer in the *War Booty* exhibition catalogue says that, as well as supplying Swedish libraries with books and educating the Swedish people, the plundering can also be understood as a religious purge. Gustavus certainly enjoyed portraying himself as a warrior of the Protestant north but he was a pragmatist, as his alliance with Catholic France attests, and the German socialist historian Franz Mehring (1846-1919), in his biography of Gustavus, believes his motivation for warfare and looting was more economic than religious.

In 1626, the Swedes confiscated the library of the Jesuit College in Braniewo in Poland. Among the treasures there was a copy of *De Revolutionibus* by Copernicus from 1543. They then emptied the libraries of Frombork, including the cathedral library, which held a variety of precious books by Copernicus because he had left his entire collection of books to the Warmian diocese. In 1914 the Swedish government conducted an investigation, called the *Biblioteca Copernicana*, which revealed that there are 46 Copernicus volumes in Sweden, some of which contain his handwritten notes in the margins. Two are housed in the university library in Uppsala, 39 in the astronomic observatory at Uppsala University and one in the royal library in Stockholm.

Gustavus impressed Cardinal Richelieu, who helped negotiate the treaty of Altmark in 1629 between Sweden and Poland to free up Gustavus and the Swedish army to help France in the Thirty Years War. Leaving government to his Chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna, Gustavus left for Germany on 19th May 1630. He took formal leave of his estates as he realised he might never see Sweden again. He advanced through Germany and shattered the Imperial army at the battle of Breitenfeld on 7th September 1631.

Although originally intending to prevent the Catholic Habsburgs from dominating the Baltic, by 1632, Gustavus was pursuing his own grand imperial designs. After he took control of Pomerania, he planned a *Corpus Evangelicorum* (Nuremberg, 1632) of four circles consisting of the Upper and Lower Rhine, Swabia and Franconia, dividing up his new Swedish-held territory as a presidency under the Swedish Crown, but the ambitious king was killed before he could put it into place.

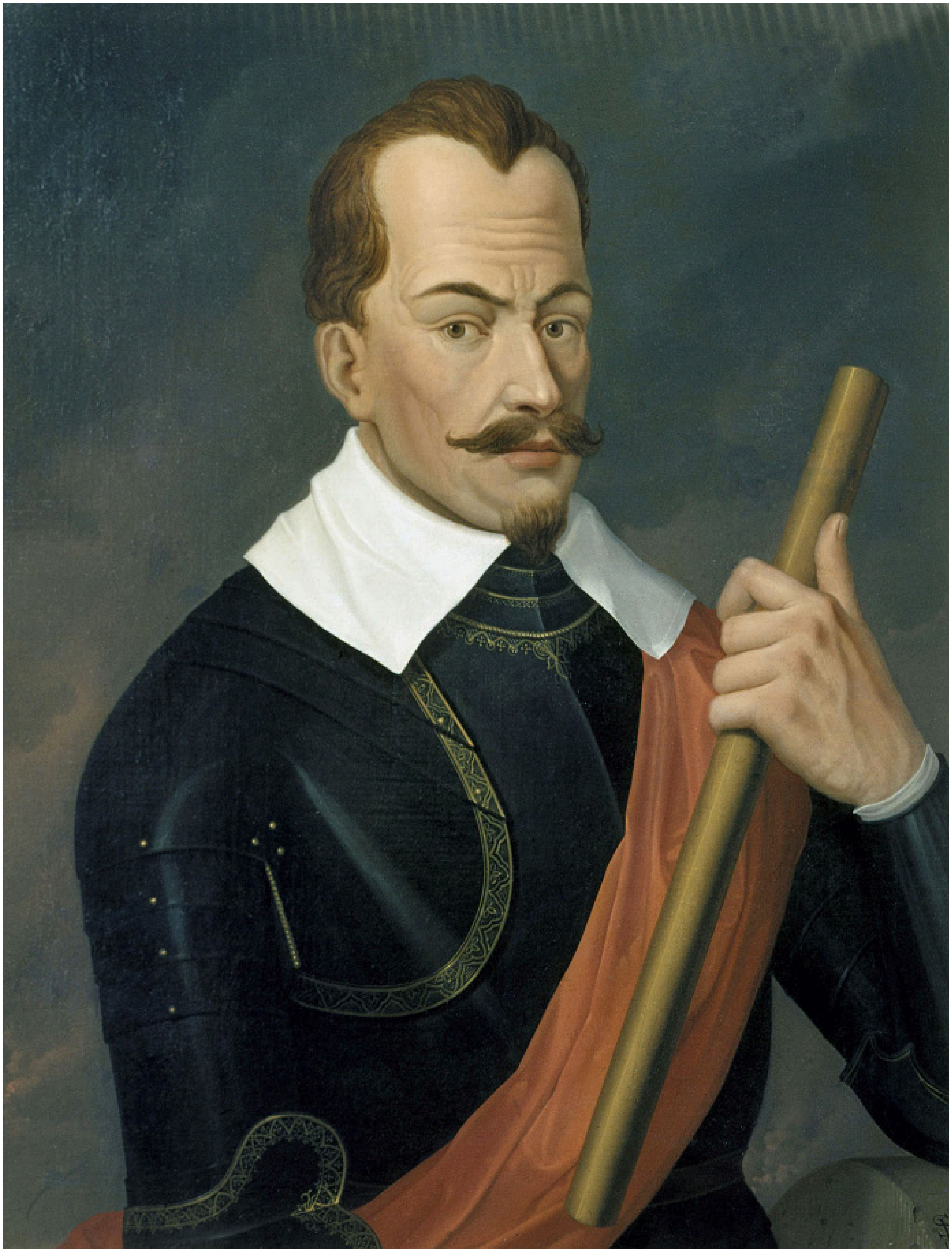
Gustavus met the Imperial general Wallenstein in battle on 6 November 1632, at the battle of Lutzen. The Swedish soldiers won the battle but they lost their king. Gustavus disliked wearing armour because of an old wound in his neck and was killed when he mistakenly wandered into enemy lines.

Was Gustavus a selfish Swedish nationalist who destroyed Germany or a Swedish saviour who increased the size of his country, modernised its army, set it on course for its golden century and vastly increased its holdings of gold, art and books? His life was cut short, but he made his mark as a most accomplished military commander and an exceptionally capable man.

The two generals leading the forces of the Imperial and Holy Roman Empire against Gustavus were Albrecht von Wallenstein (1583-1634) and Johann Tserclaes, Count of Tilly (1559-1632). Neither was involved in state-sponsored looting for Ferdinand II, although Wallenstein looted extensively for himself. Wallenstein was one of the richest men in central Europe through two strategic marriages to Lucretia Nikossie von Landeck, who came with vast estates in Moravia, and Isabella Katharina, daughter of Count Harrach.

Wallenstein was a military entrepreneur. In 1625, despite subsidies from the Pope and Spanish allies, Ferdinand II, the Holy Roman Emperor, asked Wallenstein to raise an army for him. Wallenstein agreed, provided the army funds be solely under his control and that he could keep and distribute all the loot and ransom. With an army of 30,000, that later swelled to 100,000, he joined the Catholic League commanded by Tilly and defeated Protestant armies in Denmark, Anhalt and Silesia.

Wallenstein invented a new way of funding warfare. He plundered his enemies, but also demanded war taxes from cities and princes that were on the Emperor's side, thus spreading the cost on to both the victor and the vanquished. This idea inspired many later kings and finance ministers and Colbert admiringly agreed in a famous line that, 'one should pluck the goose with a minimum of screeching.'



Albrecht Wallenstein, Duke of Friedland and Commander during the Thirty Years' War by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1794-1874) based on a painting by Antony van Dyck (1599-1641).

After the battle of White Mountain in 1619, Wallenstein invented estates that had belonged to his mother's family and confiscated enormous tracts of Protestant lands creating a new territory called Friedland in northern Bohemia. After more successful battles he was made an imperial count in 1622, a prince in 1623 and Duke of Friedland in 1625. He also added to his holdings and by 1622 was one of the largest landowners in central Europe. He organised his own estates for recruitment and support for his regiments.

In 1625 Wallenstein was named commander against the Protestant, German and Danish forces and in 1627 he swept the Danes out of Silesia and northern Germany. His price was the payment of his debts, huge new land grants and the Duchy of Mecklenburg. Nervous of Wallenstein's growing power Ferdinand dismissed him but had to recall him when Gustavus and the Swedish armies invaded in 1630. The secret terms of their agreement included additional monies, estates and independence from religious or political interference in territories taken from the Protestant forces.

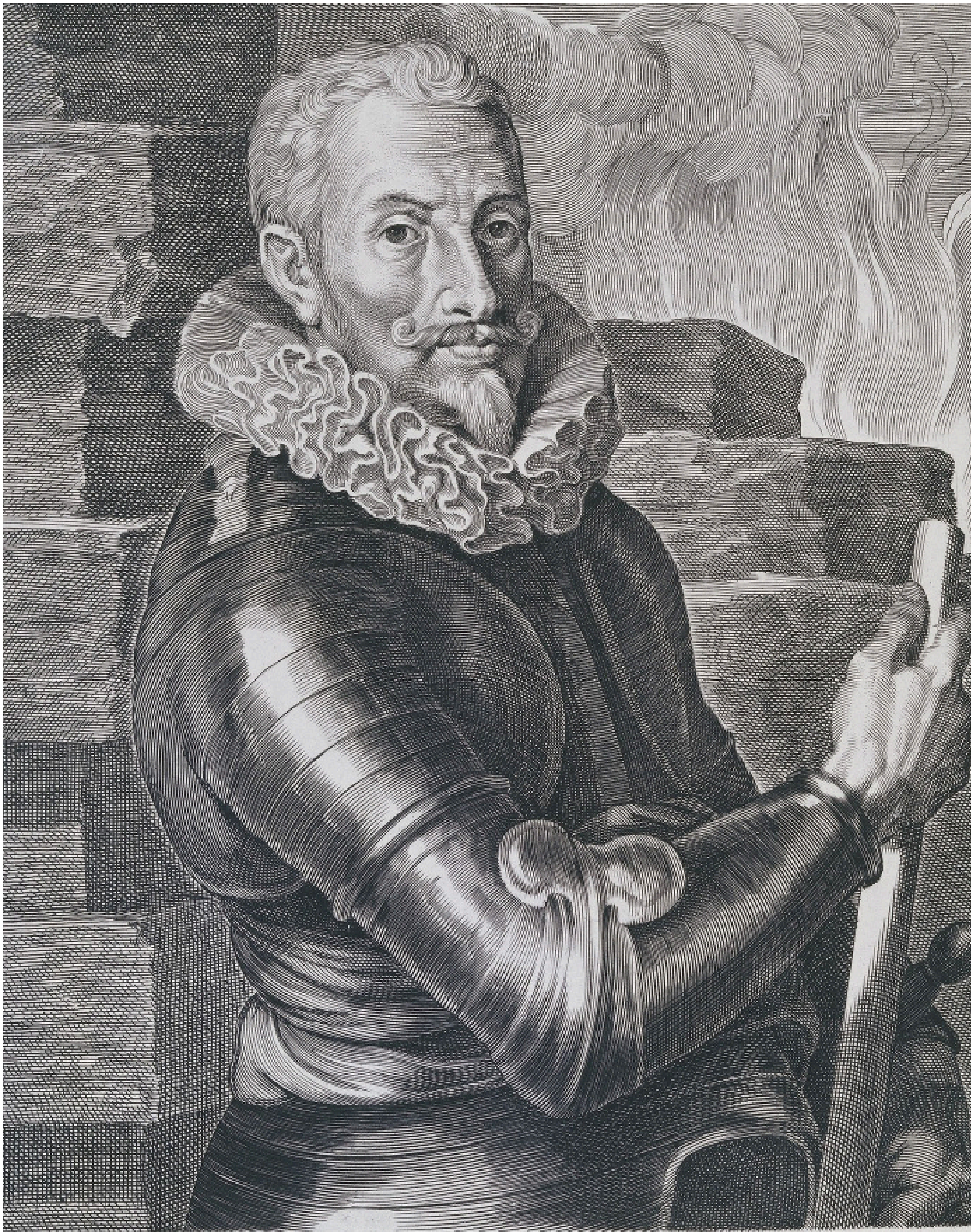
Although defeated at the battle of Lutzen on 16th November 1632, and abandoning his artillery in the retreat, Wallenstein's soldiers killed Gustavus. Both sides feared Wallenstein and courted his allegiance. It seems likely that Wallenstein wanted the Bohemian crown for himself as he was now in negotiations with the Protestant princes.

Wallenstein was assassinated by Ferdinand's agents, at the fortress of Eger, on 25th February 1634. Wallenstein castle, which remained with Wallenstein's heirs until 1945 and is now Czechoslovak state property, rivals its neighbour Prague castle in size and splendour, and is a lasting legacy of this ambitious general and businessman.

Johann Tserclaes, Count of Tilly, had none of Wallenstein's financial ambition. He only wanted to be an exceptional soldier and rose to Field Marshal and commanded the Catholic forces of the Holy Roman Empire. Nicknamed the 'monk in armour', because of his discipline and frugality, he is shown in Van Dyck's portrait as a neat, small man. Tilly defeated the Germans, Bohemians and Danish. Commanding armies alongside Wallenstein, he was finally defeated by Gustavus at the battle of Breitenfeld in 1631. He was wounded shortly afterwards in the Battle of Rain, when hit by a cannon ball, and died 10 days later whilst being treated by Gustavus's own physician, sent by the Swedish king.

Tilly did not loot on his campaigns and tried to stop his soldiers from doing so. He lost control of his soldiers after they stormed the city of

Magdeburg in 1631 after a 2-month siege. His soldiers burnt the city and killed 30,000 of the inhabitants.



ILLVST.$^{\text{MVS}}$ IOANNES, COM. DE T'SERCLAES. DOM. TILLI, BARO.
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Johann Tserclaes von Tilly, Field Marshall (1559-1632). From an engraving by Pieter de Jode, before 1632 after a portrait by Anthony van Dyck

Tilly was only involved in the theft of the famous library of Heidelberg known as the Biblioteca Palatina in 1622, but then he was under direct orders from Maximilian I, Elector of Bavaria, who wanted the library as a gift for Pope Gregory XV. Tilly captured the city of Heidelberg after an 11-week siege on 19th September 1622.

The Biblioteca Palatina was the most important library of the German Renaissance, with approximately 5000 printed books and 3524 manuscripts. Its origin can be traced back to 1388 when the first Rector, Marsilius van Inghen, purchased a chest of documents, stored at the Heiliggeistkirche, then the University Cathedral. Bishops, chancellors and professors gave early donations and in the 1430s Elector Louis III founded the Stiftbibliothek, further enhanced by Elector Ottheinrich in the 1550s, who combined all the university libraries into one.

In the late sixteenth century, Ulrich Fugger, from the famous Augsburg family of bankers, whose library was considered equal to the Pope's, gave manuscripts worth 80,000 crowns to the library including the illustrated Sachsenspiegel. Although Tilly's soldiers and officers, privately looted some of these and circulated them on the book market during the seventeenth century, most of the library was secured by Tilly for Maximilian who gave them to the Pope, 'as sign of his loyalty and esteem.'[7]

Tilly gave the task of supervising the despatch of the precious books and manuscripts to the energetic Greek Catholic scholar and theologian Leo Allatius (*c.* 1586-1669), who packed the library into 196 cases containing around 3500 manuscripts and supervised its trip to Rome on 200 mules across the Alps guarded by a troop of Bavarian riflemen. Allatius became custodian of the Vatican library in 1661 and published on a wide range of subjects himself, including the first methodical discussion of vampires, in 1645.

On its arrival in Rome in 1623 the library was incorporated into the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, each volume retaining the Wittelsbach coat of arms as a reminder of its origin. Later, Napoleon had 37 of the finest examples included as war reparations under the Treaty of Tolentino of 1797 between France and the Papal States. These manuscripts were sent to France and placed in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris. After the Congress of Vienna, where the leading European powers divided up Europe post-

Napoleon and attempted restitution of the works of art robbed by the French, the contested manuscripts were returned to Heidelberg as opposed to Rome.

In 1816, Prince Hardenberg, Prime Minister of Prussia, and Ignaz von Wessenberg, the Catholic theologian, persuaded Pope Pius VII to give 52 manuscripts to the University of Heidelberg, arguing that the manuscripts in ancient German were little studied by the Italian scholars. Thus, fewer than 100 manuscripts went back to Heidelberg and the other 3400 books and manuscripts remain in the Vatican library, the greatest cultural theft by the Catholic armies during the Thirty Years War. The Biblioteca Palatina in Heidelberg has been largely rebuilt since then with gifts and acquisitions and an inventory of 1934 found over one million books, including important manuscripts from the secularised monasteries of Salem and Peterhausen.

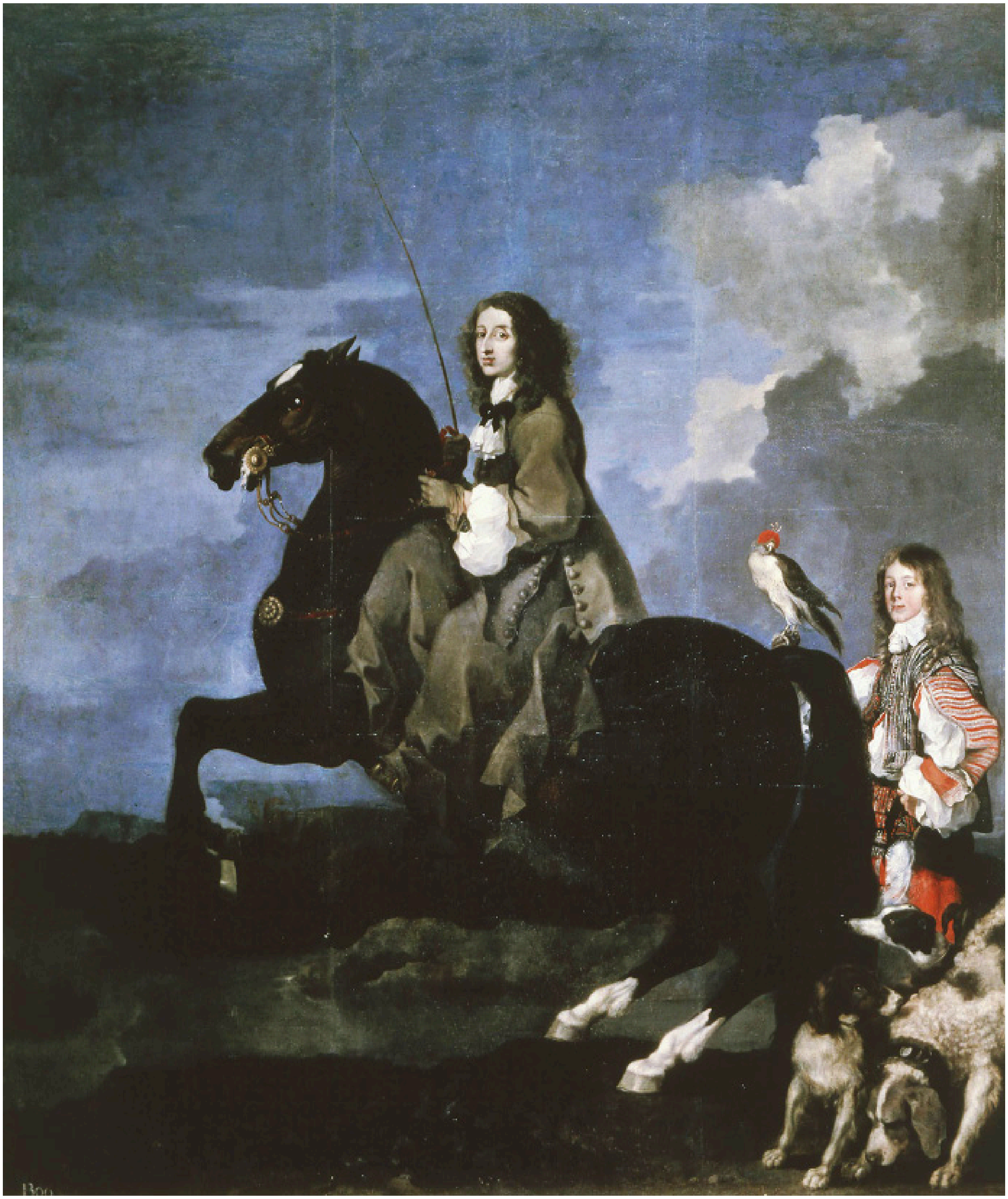
Gustavus's heir was his daughter Christina (1626-1689), Queen of Sweden from 1632 to 1654. From the age of 6 until her abdication, she was an unusual character and her love of looted art and books exceeded even that of her father. Gustavus loved his daughter and she reciprocated, crying for three days when he left on his final campaign. Although he had private misgivings about her becoming queen, his determination to continue his line overcame these.

Gustavus's wife, Maria Eleanor of Brandenburg, was emotionally unstable, and he was worried that this instability might be passed on to his daughter. Two years before his death he wrote to Oxenstierna, 'If anything happens to me, my family will merit your pity, not for my sake only, but for many reasons. They are womenfolk, the mother lacking in common sense, the daughter a minor - hopeless if they rule, and dangerous if others come to rule over them.'[8]

When Christina was born, hairy, and screaming in a strong voice, the nurses presumed she was the long-awaited boy required by the House of Vasa. The king was, however, delighted, stating that, 'She'll be clever, she has made fools of us all.'[9] She was also born with what the Scandinavians call a 'victory shirt' or a more or less intact foetal membrane surrounding her, which was considered a good omen. Questions regarding her gender were to remain with her all her life.

Gustavus Adolphus secured her right to the throne before he left for his final campaign, well aware that he might not return. He then gave instructions that Christina was to be raised as a prince and future king. Christina was given lessons in religion, philosophy, Greek, Latin and warfare. Dropped as a baby, she was left with one shoulder higher than the other, but she became accomplished at riding, shooting and fencing. She became fluent in French, Italian, German, Dutch, Latin and Greek, and had knowledge of Hebrew and Arabic. When Pierre Chanut arrived in Stockholm as French Ambassador in 1645 he said she spoke French as if she had been born in the Louvre, and Italian diplomats commented on her fluent Italian. Oxenstierna, who ruled during the girl's childhood, taught her politics and said of the 14-year-old, 'She is not at all like a female' and that she had a, 'bright intelligence.' Later commentators were less complimentary and after her voluntary exile to Rome the Pope described her as, 'A queen without a realm, a Christian without faith, and a woman without shame.'[10]

She was described as dark, deep-voiced, short and lopsided and mainly wore men's breeches and jackets. She refused to marry, despite pressure from courtiers to provide an heir and was fond of saying, 'Marriage is as good as incompatible with love' and that she had, 'an insurmountable dislike for all the things that females talked about and did.'[11] There was speculation about her sexual orientation, but she said she wore men's clothes because they were more comfortable and that she had been raised as a boy.



Christina, Queen of Sweden (1626-89), by Sebastien Bourdon, (1616-71)

Christina preferred men to women, but courted beautiful women. She enjoyed the company of highly-educated women, regardless of their looks. Her passion was a beautiful woman called Ebba Sparre with whom she spent much time, including her nights. She introduced her to the British

Ambassador as her bed-fellow, and often remarked on her beauty. Sharing a bed with someone of the same sex was common then and aristocratic ladies often entertained other women in their bedrooms. Later, in exile in Rome, she wrote passionate love letters to Sparre and kept a portrait of her in her bedroom.

She has become an icon for the modern transgendered community. Some historians maintained she was a physical mixture of a man and a woman and this led to an examination of her mortal remains in 1965, which proved she was all woman, The silver mask, crown and sceptre buried with her were still in place and left in peace.

In 1644, aged 18, Christina ascended the throne and sensibly made peace with Denmark. She also sued for peace in the Thirty Years War at the peace congress in Germany in 1645 against Chancellor Oxenstierna's will. Christina wanted peace but she was developing a love of the arts, particularly for paintings, books and sculptures, and was determined to raid Prague before peace was concluded.

Prague castle

Sweden had no funds for acquiring books and paintings and, during Christina's regency administration, Axel Oxenstierna issued instructions to Swedish military commanders to keep up the confiscation of fine libraries. These were sent to Sweden in their entirety and the looting of Jesuit book collections was regarded as fair play in the struggle against the Catholic counter-reformation. Poland, Denmark, the Baltic states, Moravia and Bohemia all suffered heavy losses, continuing the earlier predations of Gustavus Adolphus.

Christina wanted loot for herself. If it had been for her country she would have left it when she later abdicated, but instead she took as much as she could.

The one major court that hadn't been looted by the Swedish troops was that of Rudolf II in Prague, which was close to Sweden's armies in southern Poland. Rudolf II (1552-1612) had been King of Hungary, King of Bohemia, Archduke of Austria and Holy Roman Emperor. An ineffectual ruler, whose mistakes led to the Thirty Years War, he was a devotee of the occult and astronomy and a great patron of Renaissance art. He brought to his court in Prague the best artists, architects, scientists, philosophers and humanists. The astronomer mathematicians Tycho Brahe (1546-1601) and Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) established observatories in Prague. Rudolf was particularly keen on painting, sculpture and the decorative arts. He encouraged artists such as Bartholomeus Spranger, Roelandt Savery and Jacob Hoefnagel, the sculptor Adriaen de Vries, and goldsmiths Paulus van Vianen and Wenzel Jamnitzer to come to Prague. His agents travelled Europe looking for works by Titian, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Correggio, Veronese and Cranach, Dürer and Breughel and he amassed a collection of over 1000 paintings.

Rudolf formed the famous Kunstkammer, or collection of curiosities - a microcosm of *naturalia* (minerals, plants and animals) combined with *artificialia* (items made by man). Rudolf spent hours alone with his collection and the legacy of Rudolfine Prague was a centre of humanist learning and artistic creativity and the finest art collection of its day.

After Rudolf's death, there were some dispersals, some objects removed to Vienna, and some looted by Maximilian of Bavaria early in the Thirty Years War. However, there was still enough left for Christina, who was conscious of her own modest collection in northern and remote Sweden. Under cover of negotiating the Treaty of Westphalia, Christina sent her army down to Prague under the command of the Swedish General Kristof von Konigsmarck (1600-1663), one of the most experienced Swedish generals of the war, who became a field marshal in 1655.

Konigsmarck sent a small raiding party under Imperial renegade Ernst Odawalsky (later ennobled by Christina) to scale the city wall of Prague's

Kleinsite or ‘Little Side’ on the west bank of the Moldau. Odawalsky then overpowered the guards and opened the Strahov gate for Konigsmarck, who entered the fortress with 3000 men. Hradčany castle housed the royal treasury with Rudolf’s collection and the surrounding palaces were full of the treasures of the Austro-Bohemian nobility. Konigsmarck threatened the treasurer, Dionysio Miseroni, with torture until he released the keys for the art chamber.

The inhabitants successfully defended the Charles Bridge and the Swedes settled for looting the castle and the surrounding palaces.

Before the troops arrived in Prague, Christina had reminded Konigsmarck that she was most interested in the library and other rarities. Konigsmarck and Odawalsky systematically looted the treasure and the immense haul included books, manuscripts, paintings and sculpture. Konigsmarck forced Miseroni to draw up a new inventory. When they found a live lion, they brought that as well, despite the difficulties involved in transporting it. It was kept in a den in the moat of the royal castle in Stockholm and was fed animals to entertain guests. Unfortunately, the lion was too tame to kill anything and was soon given away.

Konigsmarck’s inventory of the loot contains 100 manuscripts, including the *Codex Gigas* (Devil’s bible) and the *Codex Argenteus* (Silver bible), which remain in Sweden today. Rudolf II’s famous library was emptied, as was the collection of books from the Ursini-Rosenberg family library which had been founded by Prince Peter Vok Rosenberg (1539-1611), one of the leading members of the Bohemian nobility. It was famous for a large number of precious manuscripts and incunabula (books printed before 1500). The family had transferred the library only the year before to Hradčany castle in Prague for safekeeping.

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The Silver Bible, *Codex Argenteus*, is Sweden's most valuable book and one of the world's most famous manuscripts. It was written in Italy at the beginning of the 6th century AD.

The Swedes looted the Premonstratensian monastery of Strahov, several aristocratic palaces and the Jesuit College. The booty was inventoried and packed up, the books alone taking up 30 large chests. The loot was shipped quickly down the Elbe to the Baltic Coast during the autumn. The Osnabruck peace talks dictated that all booty not removed when hostilities ended was to be returned. The peace was not signed until October 1648, by which stage the loot was safely in the border fortress of Domitz in Mecklenburg.

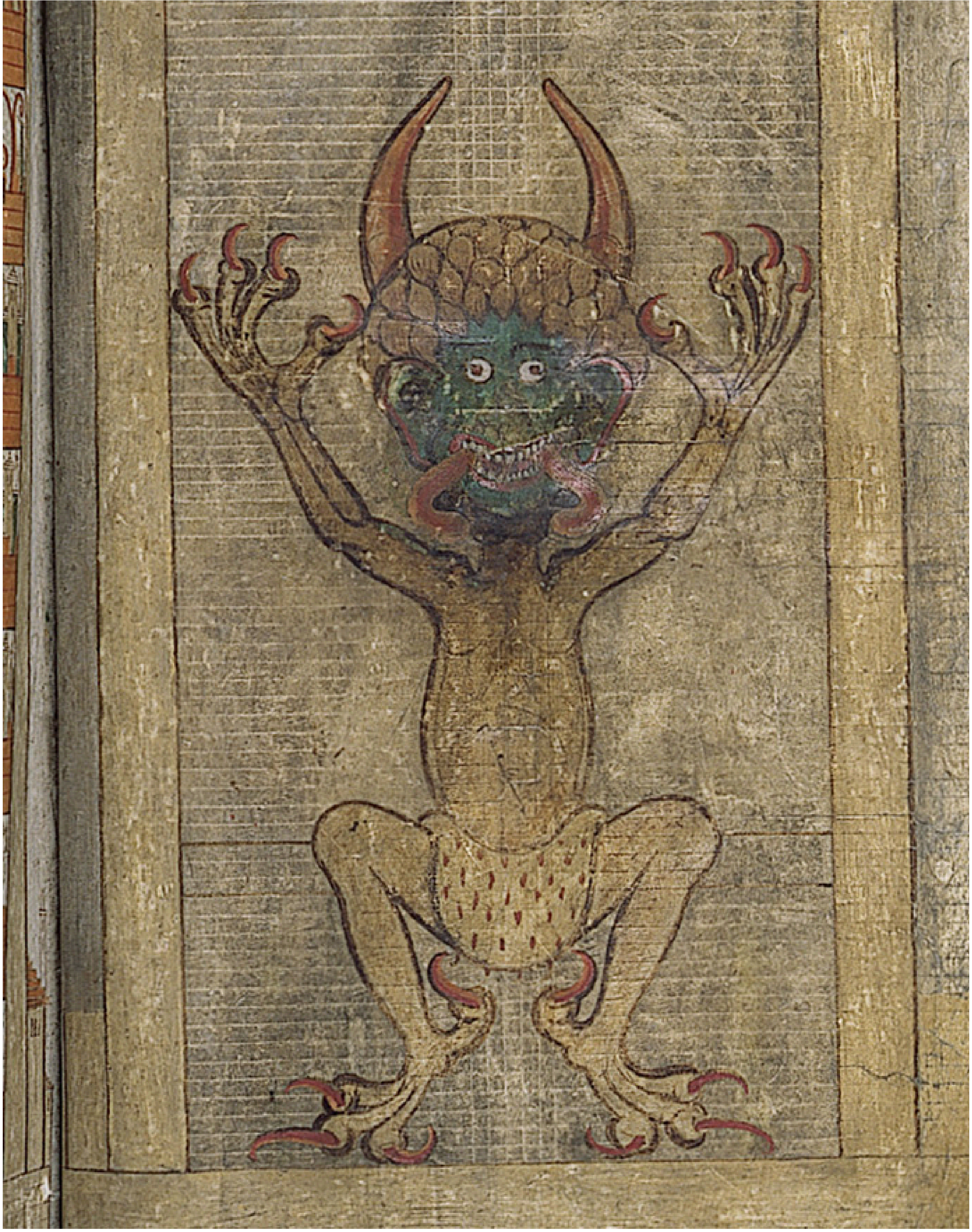
The Treaty of Westphalia provided for a limited return of property to the estates of the Holy Roman Empire, a directive aimed squarely at the Swedes. Article CXIV stated, 'that the Records, Writings and Documents and other Moveables be restored.' The treaty is important in the history of modern European looting as the first attempt at restitution since the *Sanctio Pragmatica* of Emperor Justinian in AD 554.

In May 1649, the treasure was shipped to Sweden via Wismar. An inventory made on its arrival in Stockholm reveals there were 780 items of importance including 470 paintings, 69 bronzes, the Devil's and Silver bibles, astronomical and musical instruments, 131 pieces of majolica, and the sword of the Hussite hero, Jan Zizka, from the battle of Grunwald. Christina enlarged the royal castle to house her treasures and tasked her librarian, Isaac Vossius, with cataloguing the books and manuscripts. This took until March 1651. Most of the books ended up in the royal castle library but some were used as payment to Christina's generals, some as presents to her favourites and some to pay the librarians in lieu of salary. Other books went to the Swedish university and grammar school libraries and to Dorpat University.

Vossius's inventory starts with the *Codex Gigas*, which, with the *Codex Argenteus*, was the most important manuscript. The *Codex Gigas* or 'giant book' is the largest medieval manuscript (92×50×22 cm) in the world (75 kg), and was created in the Benedictine monastery of Podlažice in Bohemia in the thirteenth century. It has a large devil illustrated inside and is known as the Devil's bible. It consists of 312 sheets of illustrated vellum and contains the entire Latin Vulgate version of the Bible except Acts and Revelations. It also contains Isidore of Seville's *Etymological Encyclopaedia*, the *Antiquities of the Jews* by Josephus, works of physiology, history and etymology, a calendar of necrology, a list of brothers in Podlažice monastery, a chronicle of Bohemia by Cosmas of Prague, local records and magic formulae. It is written in Latin and illustrated in gold and fine colours. Capital letters are elaborately illuminated. The codex has a unified look and the writing is consistent throughout, showing no signs of disease, age or mood swings on the part of the scribe. The belief is that the whole book was written in a very short time, and that the scribe was a monk who had breached monastic law and was walled up alive, a common punishment of the day. To try to mitigate the death sentence, the monk offered to write a book in one night to glorify the monastery. When he realised it was not possible, he sold his soul to the devil, who completed the manuscript and added his own picture as a signature. The legend accounts for Rudolf's desire for it because of his interest in the occult. The codex remained in the Swedish Royal Library from 1649 until 2007, when on 24th September, after 359 years, Sweden lent the manuscript back to Prague for the first time.

The *Codex Argenteus* or Silver bible, is a sixth-century manuscript written in gold and silver lettering on purple vellum. Written in Ravenna, it contains Bishop Ilfilas's fourth-century translation of the Bible into the Gothic language. It was probably written for the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great who was in Ravenna at that time. The manuscript disappeared for 1000 years before being found in the Benedictine monastery of Werden in the Ruhr valley near Essen in Germany. It was bought by Rudolf II before being stolen by Christina's army. It was placed in Christina's library but she did not include either of the codexes in the treasure she took with her on her abdication. The codex somehow became owned by her librarian, Isaac Vossius, who took it to Holland where it was acquired by the Swedish Count, Magnus Gabriel De La Gardie, who returned it to Sweden. Gardie had the codex bound in a chased silver binding based on designs made by the painter David Klocker Ehrenstrahl and presented it to the University of Uppsala, where it remains today.

Also amongst the treasure were the mannerist sculptures of Adriaen de Vries (1556-1626), who excelled in bronze casting, realistic form, subtle patination and refined modelling - the outstanding European sculptor of his day. After training in the Florentine studio of Gianbologna, a fellow northerner working in Italy, he was lured to Prague by Rudolf II in 1601, who made him his court sculptor or *Kammerbildhauer*. The Swedes removed the de Vries sculptures from Hradčany castle as well as those belonging to Duke Albrecht von Wallenstein in his palace gardens on the outskirts of Prague.

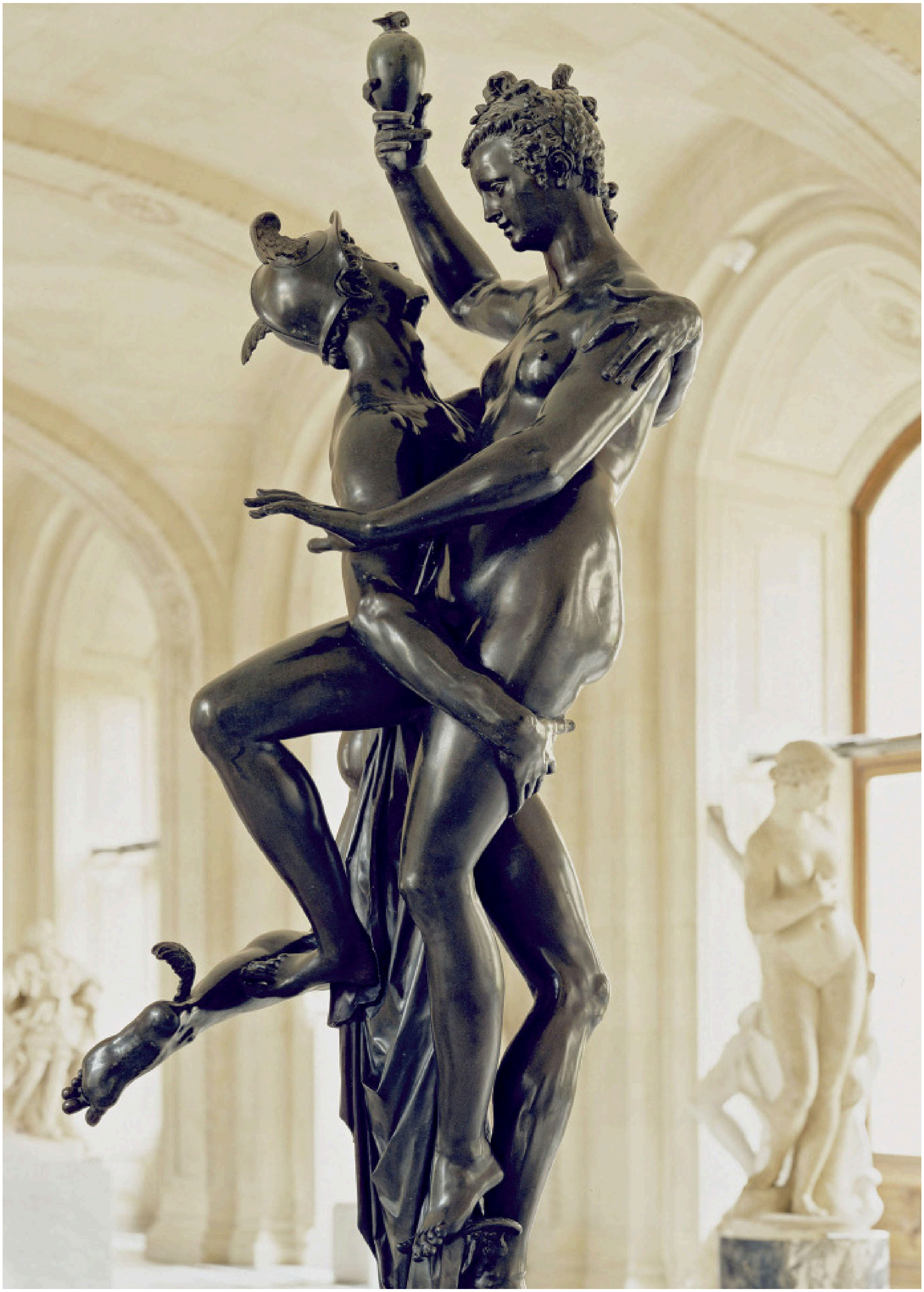


From the *Codex Gigas*, also called the Devil's Bible, in the National Library, Stockholm. Famous for reputedly being the largest surviving European manuscript and for containing a full page depiction of the Devil.

The Swedish holdings of de Vries were gathered together for the first time in a 1999 exhibition at the Stockholm Museum organised in conjunction with the Getty Museum. Most of them are in the Baroque gardens of the Royal Palace of Drottningholm, on an island in Lake Malar in Stockholm which is now a Unesco World heritage site. Drottningholm also houses other works by de Vries taken by the Swedes, such as the 'Hercules Fountain' made for Fredensborg Palace in Denmark and stolen during the Swedish-Danish war of 1658. The majority of his work has sat in remote Sweden since the seventeenth century.

Christina was delighted with the treasure. She added the books to her already extensive library, The paintings included works by Veronese, Titian and Correggio. Contemporary opinions agree that she was knowledgeable about art. According to the French Duc de Guise, Christina could speak, 'eight languages but mostly French and that as if she had been born in Paris. She understands painting as well as anyone. In fact she is an absolutely extraordinary person.'[12]

A favourite of Christina's was Titian's *Venus Anadyomene* in which a young and voluptuous Venus is standing in the sea and turning to her side as she wrings out her hair after bathing. This painting later entered the collection of the Dukes of Sutherland who lent it to the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh after the Second World War, before selling it to the Gallery for £11 million in 2003. The picture had an open market value of around £20 million in 2003, but the nation was able to buy it because British legislation allowed tax breaks for the Duke on the sale. The value of this painting, one of Christina's looted treasures, shows what the total treasure would be worth at today's valuations. Another famous picture from Prague was *Venus Mourns Adonis* by Paolo Veronese, which travelled with Christina to Rome and was sold by Cardinal Azzolino's nephew after her death before somehow making its way back to Sweden's National Museum, where it remains.



Bronze by Adriaen de Vries (1560-1627). ***Mercury and Psyche.*** **(1593) made in Prague for Emperor Rudolf II, stolen by the Swedes and given to the King of France by Queen Christina.**

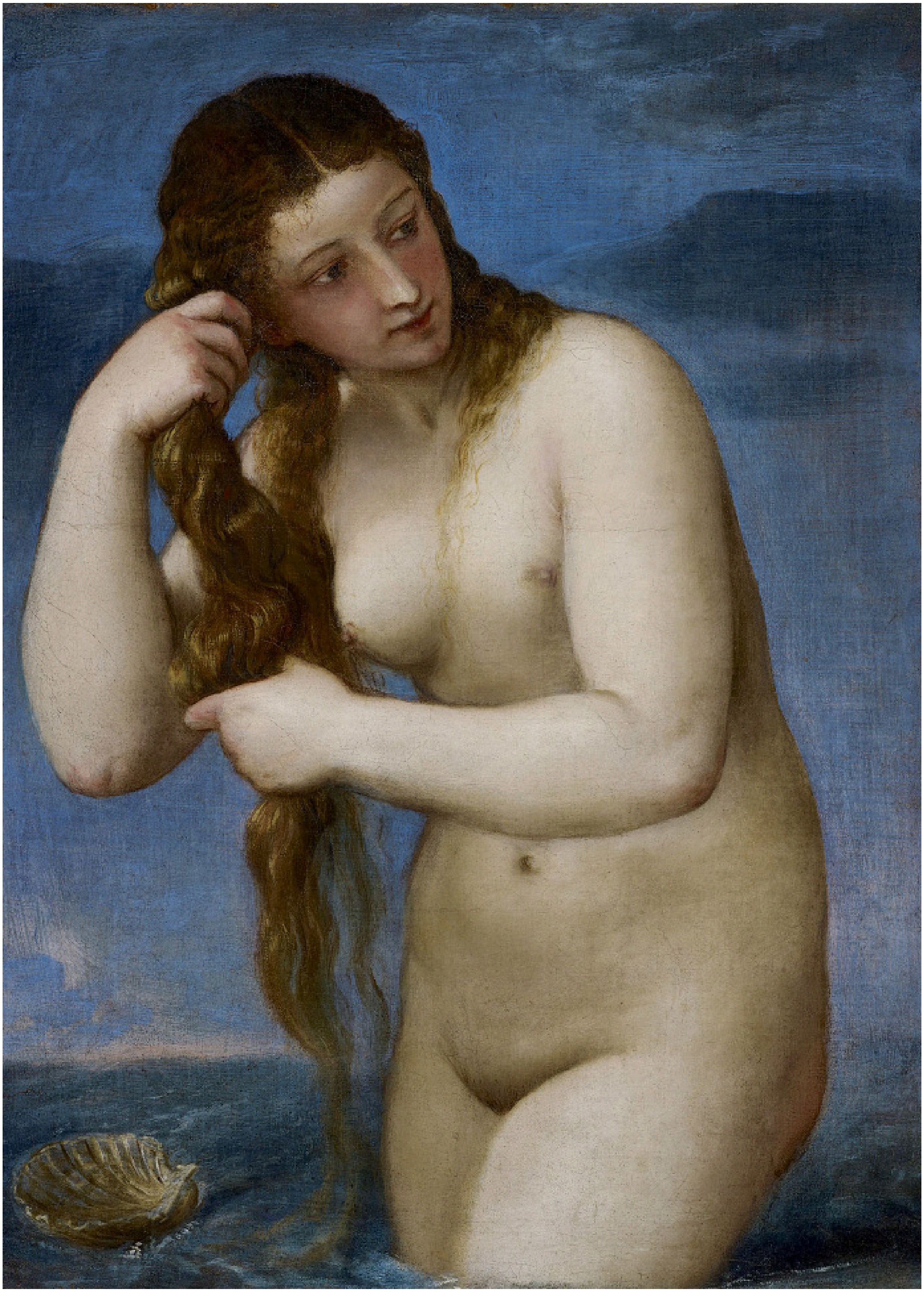
This influx of treasure injected culture and art into Sweden. Christina encouraged an influx of philosophers and scholars to her court. She developed the theatre and employed a French ballet troupe under Antoine de Beaulieu. She corresponded with René Descartes and invited him to Stockholm. She warned him of the Swedish cold and told him to come in the spring but he arrived on 4th October 1649. Soon he was complaining of the cold and that Christina made him come to the library at 5 a.m. to discuss philosophy with her and Johan Freinsheim, a German philosopher who had recently taken up the chair of oratory and political studies at the University of Uppsala. By February of 1650 Descartes had pneumonia and he was dead 10 days later. Other prominent men at court were Raphael Trichet de Fresne, who published the first edition of Leonardo's treatise on painting and dedicated it to Christina, Pierre Bourdelot, a physician learned in art who advised Christina on her collections and Isaac Vossius, the librarian who was a specialist in Arabic, mathematics and physics, who tutored her in Greek.

However, despite her court, her art collection and her crown, Christina appears to have not been satisfied with life. The art from Prague hinted at a life more sumptuous and sophisticated to the south. She found the orthodox Swedish Protestantism smothering and dogmatic and resented the constant pressure to marry and provide an heir. She rejected the sexual role of a woman and wrote later in her autobiography, 'I despised everything belonging to my sex... I could not bear to be used by a man the way a peasant uses his fields.'[13]

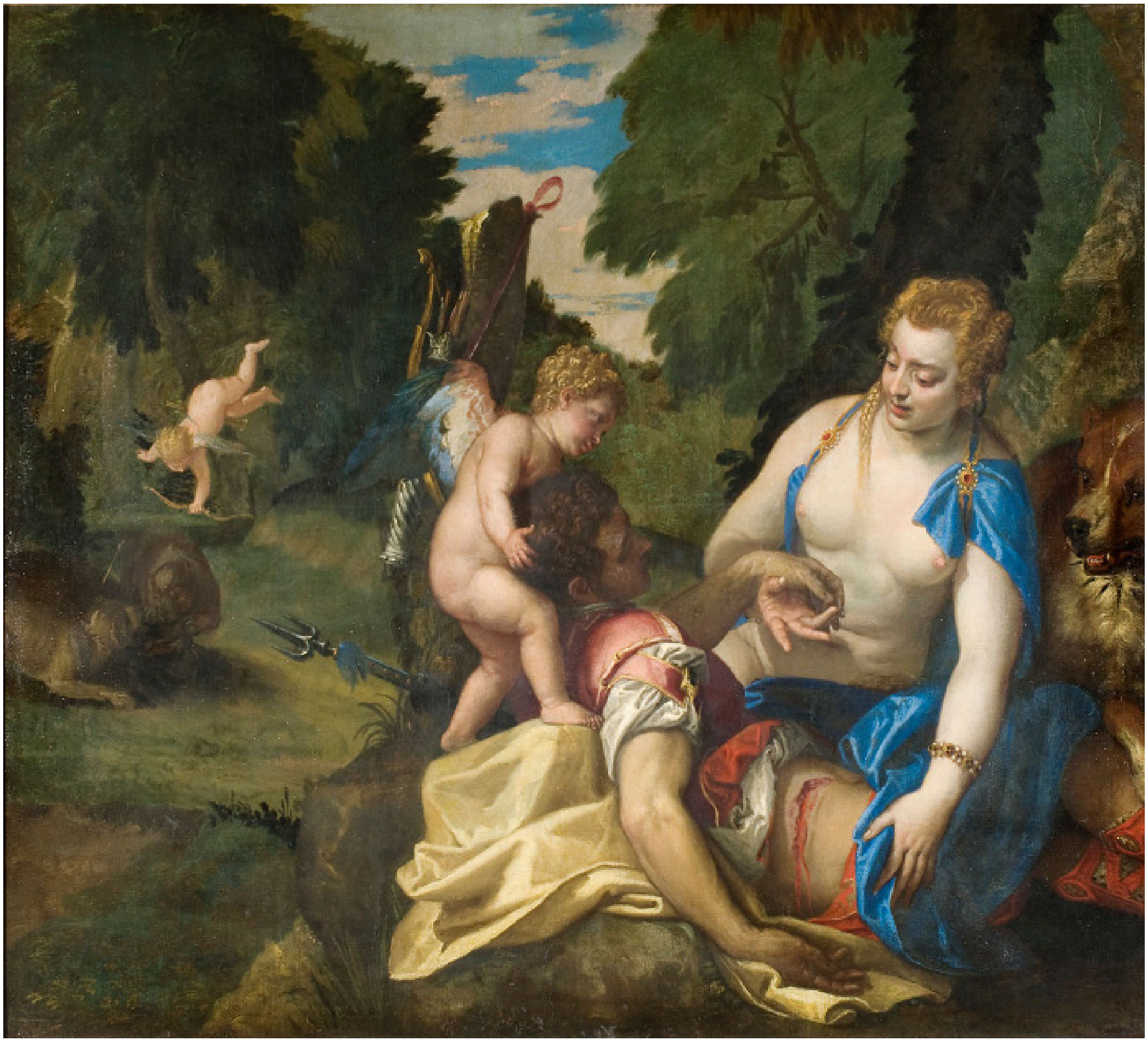
Christina was tolerant of other religions, but secretly became a Catholic, an extraordinary move, as her father Gustavus Adolphus had been the Protestant 'Lion of the North' and she had continued the Thirty Years War against the Catholic south. She was enamoured by the adventure of the move rather than any particular interest in Catholicism. Once the Jesuits heard of her secret conversion, they rapidly sent two of their own disguised as gentry and under false names to help her. The Jesuits became suspicious of her motives but persevered because they and the Pope were well aware what a political coup this could be.

She also converted because the Swedish people were tiring of her erratic and wasteful behaviour. Within 10 years she had created 17 counts, 46 barons and 428 lesser nobles, all of whom required income and land from the crown. She felt that the government remained provincial and longed for some culture and excitement. She lost touch with the common people and from 1651 seems to have ostentatiously exhibited her contempt for the Protestant religion. Her foreign policy became flighty and foolish and she explored an alliance with Spain. She enjoyed a life of excess with her foreign favourites.

On 5th June 1654 Christina abdicated in Uppsala castle in favour of her cousin Charles X Gustav. She later regretted her decision, having underestimated how much of her power was derived from her crown. She left Sweden for Rome, changing into man's clothing before riding through Denmark, and adopted the name Count Dohna for the trip. On 24th December 1654 she formally converted to the Catholic faith in Archduke Leopold's chapel in Brussels. She arrived in Rome on 23rd December riding through the Porta Flaminia, which had been specially decorated by Bernini with Christina's symbol, an ear of corn. Christina knelt before the altar in St Peter's and received the sacrament from Pope Alexander VII himself on Christmas Day. It was a major triumph for the Catholic Church as she was the most famous woman and the most notable Catholic convert of her day.



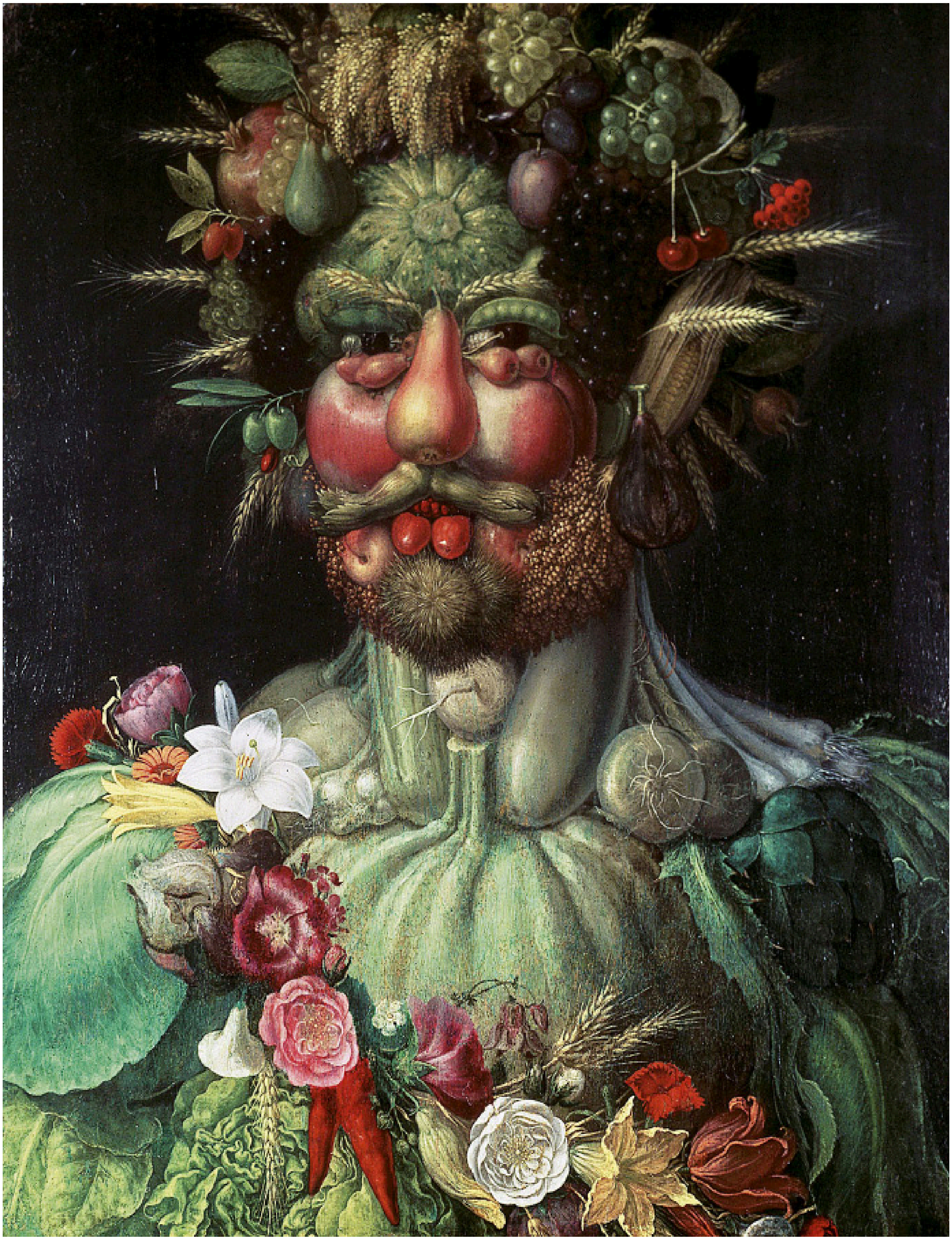
Venus Rising from the Sea ('Venus Anadyomene') c. 1520 by Titian (Tiziano Vecellio) (active about 1506; died 1576).



Venus Mourning Adonis by Paolo Veronese (1528-1588)

As the Jesuits suspected, she flouted the basic requirements of the Catholic faith. The papal summer residence was the Quirinal Palace on Monte Cavallo (the horse mountain), which Christina nicknamed Monte degli Assisi (the donkey mountain), remarking that she had never met a pope with any common sense in her 30 years in Rome. For several months she was the toast of the papal court and the centre of numerous fireworks, fake duels, acrobatics, operas and jousts. Christina founded a salon in her new home the Palazzo Farnese, rented from the Duke of Parma, where participants enjoyed languages, theatre and music. However, promised monies did not arrive from Sweden, and her household soon sank into poverty. Servants sold the palace silver and contents, whilst being careful not to touch Christina’s. They burnt the doors for firewood and went unpaid. When she finally left the Palazzo, the major-domo wrote to his master, ‘I can hardly believe she has gone. Every moment I’m afraid of seeing her still in the place.’[14]

Christina socialised freely in Rome with men her own age. A favourite and a great love, although a relationship generally believed to be unconsummated, was Cardinal Decio Azzolino (1623-1689), who had been a secretary to the ambassador in Spain and was responsible for the Vatican’s correspondence with the European Courts. Christina abandoned her men’s clothing when Azzolino was around. The Pope warned Azzolino to keep his distance, but the relationship survived and they remained lifelong friends.



Emperor Rudolf II, 1552-1612, as *Vertumnus*, *c.* 1591 by Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1527-93).

The Vatican Library

Having run out of money, and tired of Rome (the feeling was mutual), Christina headed for France, where 22,000 people turned out to see her. She impressed the young Louis XIV with her disregard for convention and became involved in an unsuccessful plot to place her on the throne of Naples. Whilst in France she had one of her Italian confidants, Monaldeschi, brutally murdered for double crossing her. This went down badly in France, where she was denounced by the Court, and in Rome where the Pope shunned her on her return. Cardinal Azzolino stuck by her and arranged for her to live in the Riario Palace, which had been designed by Bramante and belonged to the Sforza family of Milan.

It is maintained that Christina had the finest private collection of paintings and library in Rome. As well as the superb Renaissance masters taken from Prague, she added portraits of friends including Bernini, Azzolino, Ebba Sparre, Descartes, Ambassador Chanut and Doctor

Bourdelot. She was reconciled with the Pope and became friends with his successor Clement IX. In her later years Christina enjoyed the theatre, practised alchemy with Azzolino in her basement, wrote an autobiography and corresponded with the learned around Europe. She fell ill and died on the 19th April 1689. Although she requested a quiet burial, the then Pope Alexander VIII insisted on her being *lit de parade* for four days in the Riario Palace and held her funeral in St Peter's.

Christina's successors in Sweden, Charles X and Charles XI, continued the conquests of Denmark, Sweden, Poland, Norway and Lithuania, extending the Swedish empire as far east as Lake Ladoga (today's St Petersburg), west to the Norwegian coast at Trondheim, south to Malmö and north almost to the Arctic Ocean. They plundered the treasury of Warsaw, which included the Helmet of Ivan the Terrible recently exhibited in the 2007 exhibition in the Royal Armoury in Stockholm. The so-called 'Polish Scroll', known sarcastically as the 'Stockholm Scroll' in Poland, a watercolour more than 15 metres long, representing the entry of the Archduke Konstantin of Habsburg and Sigismund III Vasa with their entourage into Cracow in 1605 was also brought to Sweden at this time.

The *War Booty* exhibition reveals that the majority of treasures were brought to Sweden by Charles X and the catalogue states that no other European king of the period fought and robbed with such violence. Professor Andrzey Rottemund, manager of the royal castle in Warsaw, notes that the inventory of Stockholm castle taken in 1656 shows that the Swedes took from the sack of Warsaw 200 paintings, 30 Turkish carpets, 28 Turkish tents, furniture, bronze items, Chinese porcelain, manuscripts, marble and textiles, in addition to the 150 coach-loads of prizes removed from Lubomirskis Castle in Wisnicz.

Other items exhibited included: the Polish and Augsburg shields and armour of Sigismund II August, the coach and harness of Sigmund III, French and Milanese parade armour given to Ladislaus IV by Pope Urban VIII and Ladislaus's armour from when he was a child of around 10 years old. Children's armour is very rare and only around 100 such objects survive worldwide.

On view in the National Museum of Art in central Stockholm are the looted paintings. The museum was built in the Italian Renaissance style by the German architect Friedrich August Stuler in 1844 and houses around half a million items, including drawings, sculpture, porcelain and paintings.

Although Christina took some of the best paintings to Rome on her abdication, many of the paintings stolen by Gustavus Adolphus, Charles X and Charles XI remain. There is a portrait by Orlando Fiacco of the aging, craggy, hawk-nosed Titian facing down his impending death and a Cranach of a voluptuous Venus in see-through diaphanous veil attended by Cupid standing on one foot. The label reads, ‘Prague 1648.’

Helmet of Ivan the Terrible. Allegedly seized during a battle near Lode Castle in Estonia when, in 1574, Swedish troops gained victory over the Russian army.

The Swedish castles are also full of stolen art. The Swedish kings and queens were always short of funds and they often had to pay their generals with artworks. The generals also indulged in their own private looting. The best example is Skokloster Castle built by Count Carl Gustav Wrangel (1613-1676) between 1654 and 1676. He was raised to Count of Salmi and Suistamo by Christina and further rewarded with lands and income by Charles XI, becoming High Admiral in 1657 and Lord Constable in 1664.

Wrangel started to build the enormous baroque Palace of Skokloster in the Habo municipality between Stockholm and Uppsala in 1654.It was never completed because when Wrangel died in 1676 the workers, fearful of their wages, downed tools. The banqueting hall remains as they left it, half built and with their tools still there. Skoklosters owes its survival to the bitter arctic winters, which meant the rooms had their curtains drawn, when the castle was uninhabited. Wrangel filled the castle with the treasure he was given, acquired and looted - an extensive collection of paintings, furniture, applied art, tapestries, silver, gold, arms and books.

Later owners, the Brahe and von Essen families, added to the collections but the core remains Wrangel's collection. The castle was sold to the Swedish state in 1967 with its entire contents of 50,000 artworks and books, and a visit today illustrates the power of Sweden in the seventeenth century. The three weapons collections, the Wrangelska, the Braheska and the Bielsk, are the finest of their type in the world. A well-loved painting at Skoklosters that came from Prague is Guiseppe Arcimboldo's portrait of *Rudolf II as Vertumnus, God of the Seasons*. Arcimboldo depicts Rudolf with a head made of vegetables and fruit and suggests a parallel with ancient Rome by identifying the Rudolfine era as verdant and abundant.

The castle sits, huge and imposing, the legacy of one of Sweden's greatest generals and a poignant reminder of when Sweden was the most warlike nation in Europe.

Sweden has made some token efforts at restitution. At the end of the eighteenth century Sweden returned 133 Bohemian archival records and in 1878, 21 manuscripts were transferred as a gift to Landesarchiv in Brno in what was then Austro-Hungary. The Royal Library received 32 presentation volumes in exchange. The last item returned was the 'Polish Scroll', returned to Poland by Prime Minister Olof Palme during a visit to Poland in 1974. The Poles had asked for its return under international law, but the decision required the agreement of the government, the Home Archive and the Royal Armoury. The return caused uproar in the Swedish professional museum milieu. The recent *War Booty* exhibition has been understood by international lawyers and the bitter governments of Sweden's neighbours as an unwritten line drawn in the sand by the Swedish authorities to close this chapter of history, keep their loot, and decline to discuss it further. Whether that is possible, only the future will tell.

[1] Zimmelman, Michael, *The Spoils of War in Peaceable Sweden,* Royal Armoury, Stockholm, 23 November-6th January 2008, Exhibition catalogue.

[2] *War Booty, A Common European Cultural Heritage,* An international symposium, 29th-31st May, 2008, from the invitation brochure printed by Livrustkammen.

[3] Brzezinski, Richard, *The Army of Gustavus Adolphus,* 1 Infantry, Man-at-Arms series, Osprey Military, p. 6.

[4] *King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus,* Biography from www.answers.com, p. 3.

[5] Brzezinski, *op. cit.,* p. 6.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 8.

[7] Pauck, Wilhelm, *Luther: Lectures on Romans,* John Knox Press, Westminster, 1961, p. xxii.

[8] *King of Sweden, Gustavus Adolphus,* Biography from www.answers.com, p. 4.

[9] Aasen, Elisabeth, *Barokke Damer,* Pax, Oslo, 2003.

[10] Buckley, Veronica, *Queen Christina of Sweden, the Restless Prize of a European Eccentric,* Fourth Estate, p. 30.

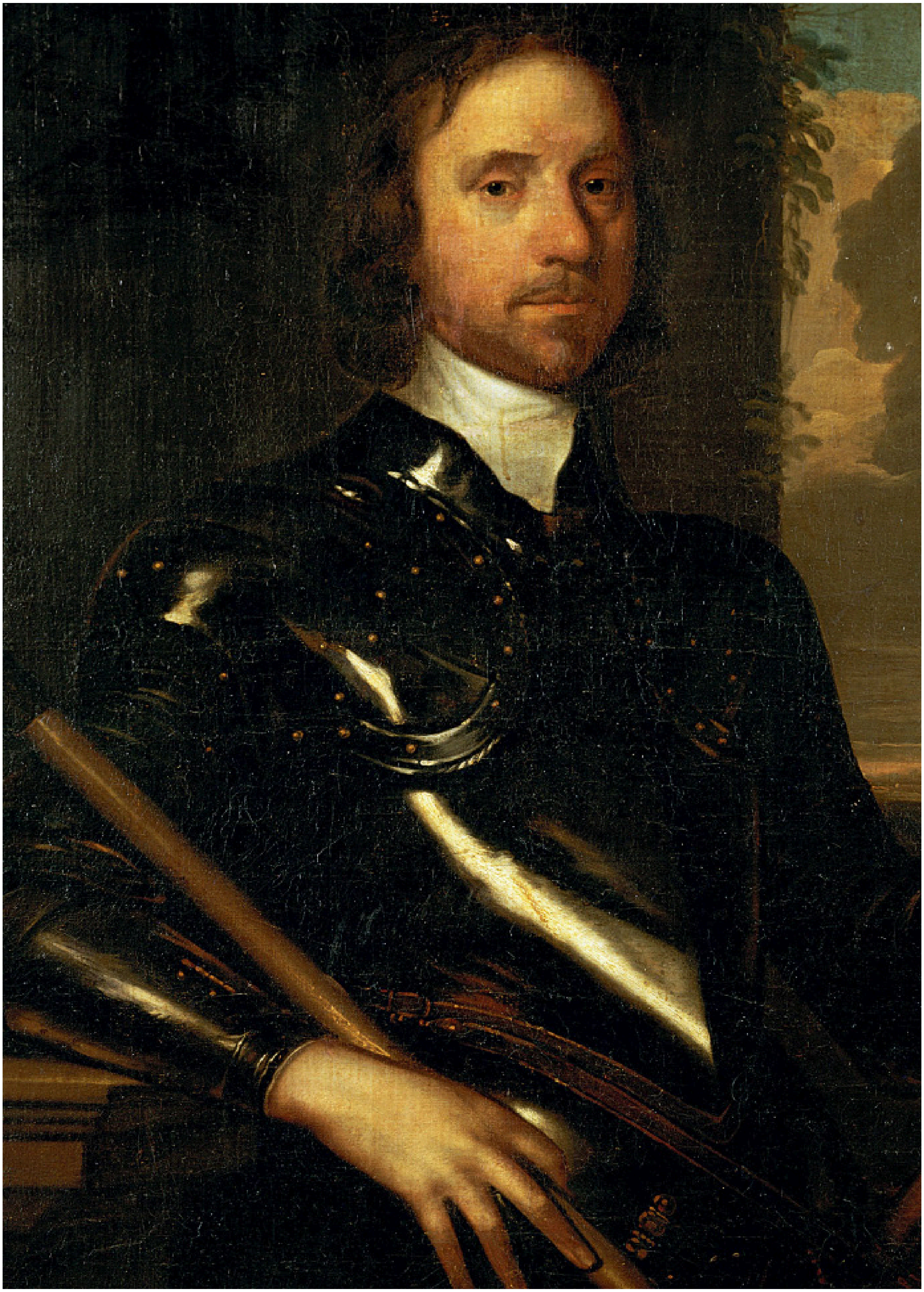
[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Zirpoli, Lillian H., ‘Christina of Sweden’s Patronage of Bernini’, *Woman's Art Journal,* Vol. 26, No. 1, (Spring/Summer, 2005), p. 1.

[13] Buckley, *op. cit.,* p. 43.

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 46.

7 - Cromwell’s disposal of the collections of Charles I



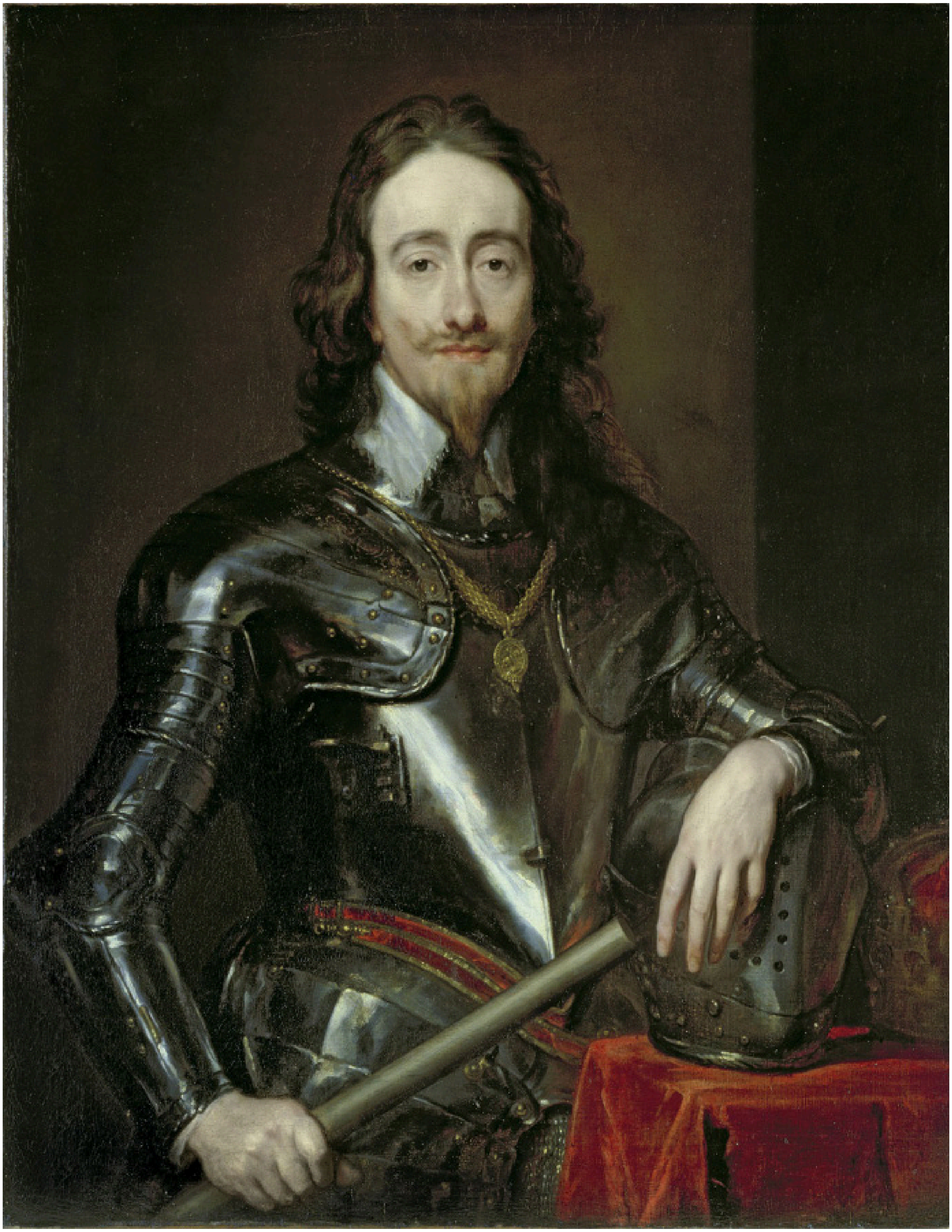
Detail of portrait of Oliver Cromwell by Robert Walker.

> ‘The mob have vented their hatred of tyrants on the pomp of tyranny. The magnificence the people have envied, they grow to detest, and mistaking for causes, the first objects of their fury are the palaces....This was the case in the contests between Charles and his parliament.’
>
> - Horace Walpole in *Anecdotes on Painting in England* in 1762.[1]

While Europe was engaged in the Thirty Years War and Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, was looting books and paintings across northern Europe, Charles I (1600-1649) amassed one of the finest art collections in Europe while King of England from 1625-1649. He was then deposed in a coup d’état in 1649 by the ‘New Model Army’ of the Puritans, who purged the parliament of any hostile MPs, forming the so-called ‘Rump Parliament.’ On 6th December 1648, having garrisoned thousands of troops in London, Colonel Thomas Pride arrested 45 MPs of 471 and refused entry to another 186, effectively stripping its claim to be the elected British parliament.

With the House of Commons illegally rigged under their leader, Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), the new ‘parliament’ passed legislation that tried and beheaded Charles before selling off his art collection.

England hasn’t been invaded by a hostile nation since William the Conqueror in 1066. Napoleon and Hitler both wanted to invade, and Napoleon got as far as amassing an army of 200,000 men at Boulogne, but both were prevented from crossing the Channel, protected by an effective British navy. William the Conqueror only had 6,000 men to move. Without invasion, England has not suffered the endemic looting of central Europe, during conflicts such as the Thirty Years War, the Napoleonic era and World Wars I and II.



Charles I **by Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641)**

The sale of Charles I's art collection and the contents of his palaces was thus the most serious looting episode in British history. Although much was later recovered by Charles II after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, around 300 paintings, including masterpieces by Titian, Raphael, Correggio, Rubens and Van Dyck were lost abroad and are now scattered around the great museums of central Europe, including the Louvre in Paris, the Prado in Madrid and the Kunsthistorisches in Vienna.

The acquisition of Charles's collection, its disposal, and its recovery in part is a story full of deception, betrayal, double dealing, switching allegiances, fraud and theft. It led to the modern art market and gave the common man his first chance to own and trade in art. The demise of Charles and his court, and the loss of their paintings and sculpture, allowed the great European collectors of the day such as Philip IV of Spain, Cardinal Mazarin of France and Archduke Leopold Wilhelm to acquire masterpieces at bargain prices. Dealers, agents and speculators made considerable fortunes.[2]

Charles was a second son who was never intended for the throne. His older brother, Henry Prince of Wales, died of typhoid in 1612 when only 18 and would have been heir to his father, James VI of Scotland, James I of England. When James ascended the throne in 1603, England was still isolated after the conflict with Spain which had begun when Philip II tried to invade England in 1588 with his armada of 130 ships.

Bad feelings and intermittent war had rumbled on and created an English dislike of Catholicism that Charles was later to fatally underestimate. James inherited a kingdom nearly bankrupt and suffering from famine and plague. Europe was dominated by the twin centres of Hapsburg imperial power, Vienna and Madrid. James's first priority was peace and he invited a Hapsburg delegation to London in 1604, signing terms with them in August. England had relied on the Low Countries for cultural inspiration and so had missed the southern European Renaissance and the paintings of Titian, Raphael, Correggio and Botticelli. British citizens had been refused travel to Europe since Henry VIII's split with Rome in the 1530s.

Now the English could visit Rome and Madrid and they rapidly realised the culture they had missed. British aristocrats were stunned by the splendour of the Hapsburg court. Early collectors were John, Lord Lumley who amassed 288 paintings by his death in 1609 and Lord Northampton who had 176 paintings at his London residence, Northampton House.

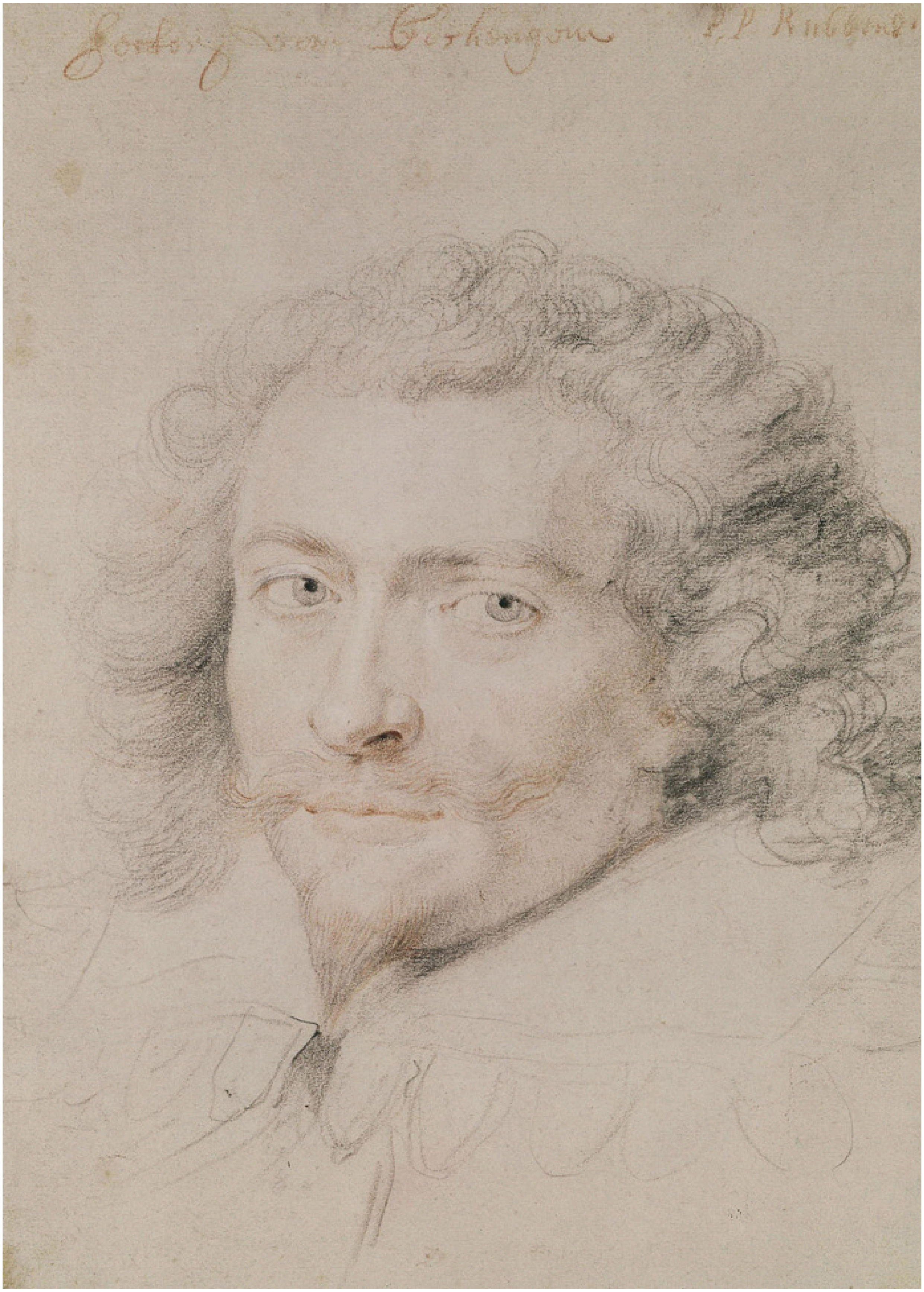
Northampton’s collection included the first Venetian paintings collected by an Englishman.

When Henry became Prince of Wales in 1610, the title came with an income of £80,000 a year. Henry started to collect paintings immediately and solicit gifts from foreign courts. The States General of the Dutch Republic gave him several seascapes by Vroom, gaining them the right to fish off the English coast.

James I made plans to marry Henry off to the Catholic sister of Cosimo II Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany. James could see that this strategic marriage would further the chances of peace between England and the Hapsburgs. Despite wanting gifts of fine Florentine artworks, protestant Henry was uneasy about the marriage, saying that he, ‘had resolved that two religions should never lie in his bed’.[3] He accepted pictures and statues from the Florentine Court in June 1611, but the marriage did not progress, partly due to the Pope’s failure to sanction the union.

In 1612, Charles became heir apparent. He was shy and retiring. Archbishop Laud, who did well under Charles, said he was, ‘A mild and gracious prince who knew not how to be, or how to be made, great.’[4] Ralph Dutton describes him: ‘In spite of his intelligence and cultivation, Charles was curiously inept in his contacts with human beings. Socially, he was tactless and diffident, and his manner was not helped by his stammer and thick Scottish accent, while in public he was seldom able to make a happy impression.’[5]

Charles wanted to emulate his late brother and to continue Henry’s nascent collection. He hoped that some of the genius of the great artists might rub off on him and he could create a splendid private world where he could retreat and contemplate. Small and weak, he believed he could enhance his royal stature through owning masterpieces and that this was the one area he could outshine both his father and his brother.


Hertogh van Bockingam
P.P Rubbens

George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham, (1591-1628) from a drawing by Sir Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).

At the same time, the richest of the British aristocrats continued to form their own collections. Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, amassed 300 paintings including works by Tintoretto, Titian, Bassano and Rubens at York House beside the Thames on the Strand. George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the former favourite of James I, created an outstanding collection, as did the Duke of Hamilton.

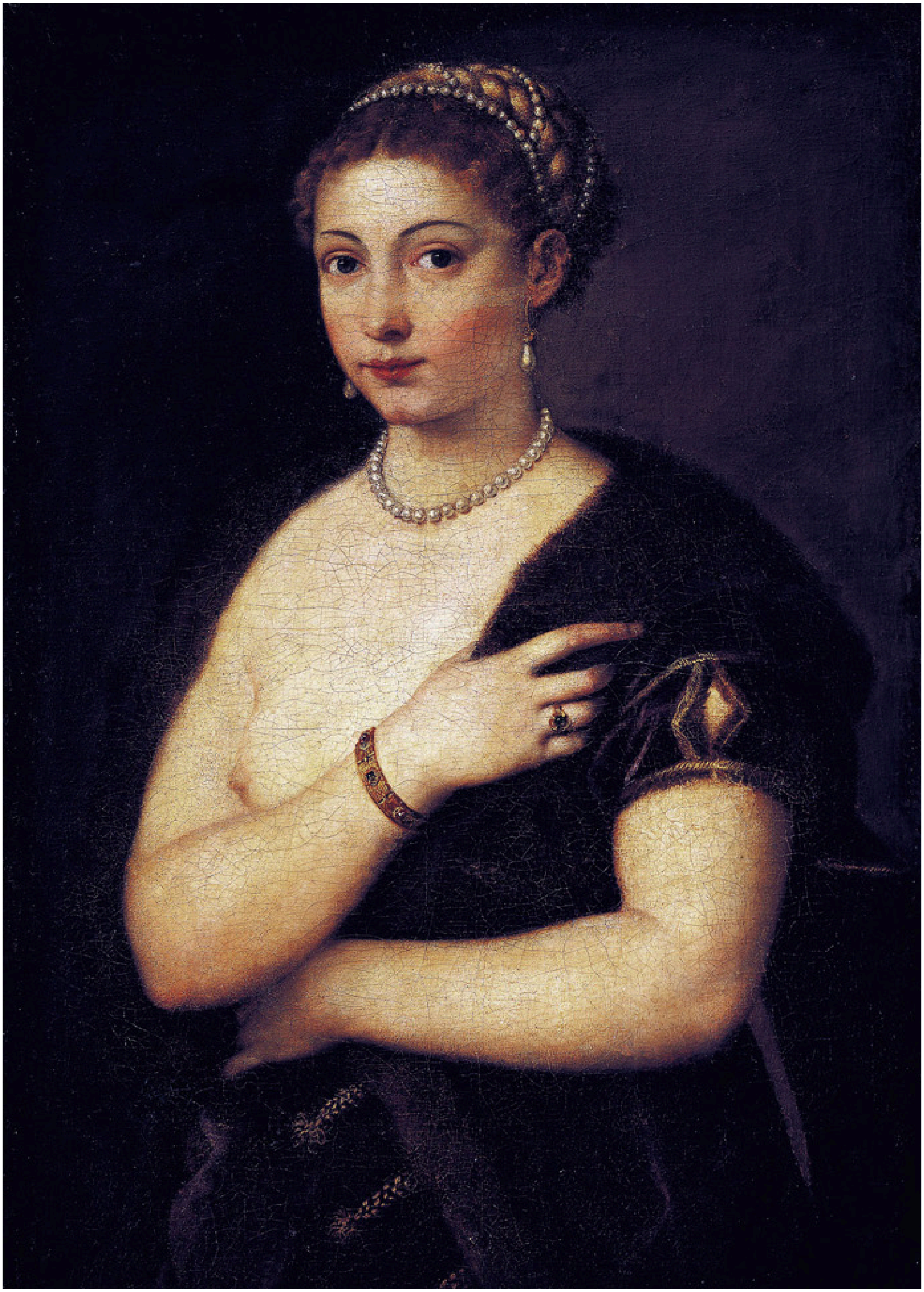
Charles was initially suspicious of Buckingham due to Buckingham's ambiguous relationship with his father, the late King. James called Buckingham his, 'sweet child and wife' and Buckingham reciprocated, writing to James, 'I naturally so love your person, and adore all your other parts, which are more than ever one man had ... I desire only to live in the world for your sake.'

Buckingham was good looking: 'the handsomest-bodied man in all of England' and Rubens's portrait of him shows a fine head of curly hair cascading over his collar, broad symmetrical features, a certain cunning about the eyes and a moustache pointed upwards at the tips in the Stuart fashion. Despite being crass, opinionated, a hopeless general and consistently offering misguided advice on foreign policy, he had charm and was the only favourite of James's court to ingratiate himself with the young Charles. In 1623 he and Charles travelled incognito to Spain to explore a match between Charles and the Infanta Maria Anna of Spain, the sister of Philip IV of Spain.

On the 7 March 1623, they found themselves in Madrid, one of Europe's most splendid capitals. The Spanish insisted on Charles converting to Catholicism and staying a year in Madrid before the marriage to the Spanish Infanta. The English people were suspicious of the Spanish match and Charles knew he could not convert, so the union came to nothing. However, having seen artworks at the Spanish court, including the selection of Titians, Charles, and Buckingham to a lesser extent, started buying paintings and asking for gifts of paintings.

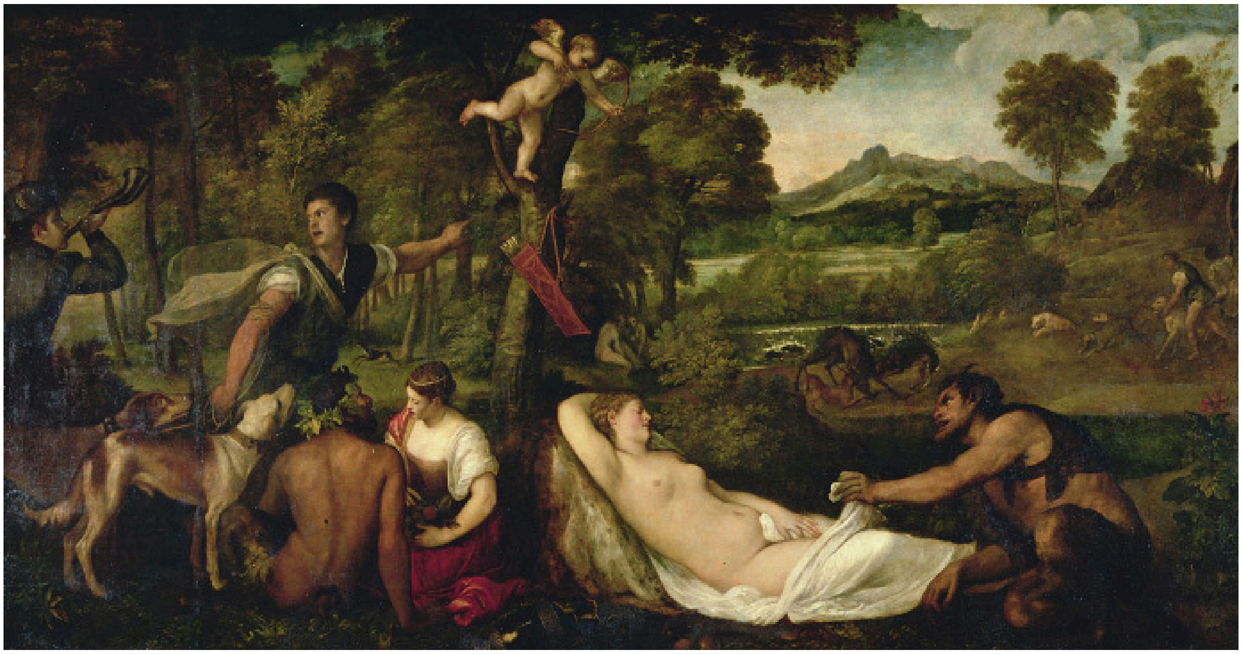
After the dull Stuart court, the young heir apparent was now the centre of attention in a great capital of Europe. They attended balls, the theatre, bullfights, fireworks and hunting expeditions and toured the Spanish art holdings of over 2000 paintings of which half were held at the Escorial palace outside Madrid. Buckingham already owned works by Tintoretto, Titian and Bassano and started buying immediately. Charles's collection contained less fashionable works by northern artists such as Hilliard and Holbein.

Charles requested art dealers Balthazar Gerbier and Tobie Matthew, and some knowledgeable aristocrats, to come and provide advice. He ordered Sir Francis Crane to secure Raphael's cartoons of the *Acts of the Apostles* for £700 from Genoa. Buckingham and Charles studied the art market, which was run by dealers, known as *tratantes en pinturas*, and attended estate sales known as *almonedas*. Within a fortnight of their arrival, Buckingham had spent £280 and Charles £80. The Spanish dramatist Lope de Vega wrote, 'When he came to Spain, the Prince of Wales, now King of England, was most zealous in having brought to him all the paintings that were to be had; he valued them inordinately and paid excessive prices for them.'[6]



***Woman in a Fur Wrap* by Titian. (1506-76)**

The Spanish court was reluctant to part with gifts as marriage was uncertain. Spanish and Italian collectors Don Jeronimo, Funes y Munoz, Marquess de la Torre and the Duke of Benevento were also reluctant to sell to him, but he bought at the *almonedas* of recently deceased collectors and secured two works by Titian, *Woman in a Fur Wrap* and *The Allocution of the Marquis of Vasto*. In *Woman in a Fur Wrap* the 23-year-old prince was presented with a beautiful young woman suggestively lowering a fur wrap over her left breast, with nothing under the fur wrap except her jewels. The picture hints at sexual promise more blatantly than anything previously seen in the art of the Stuart court.



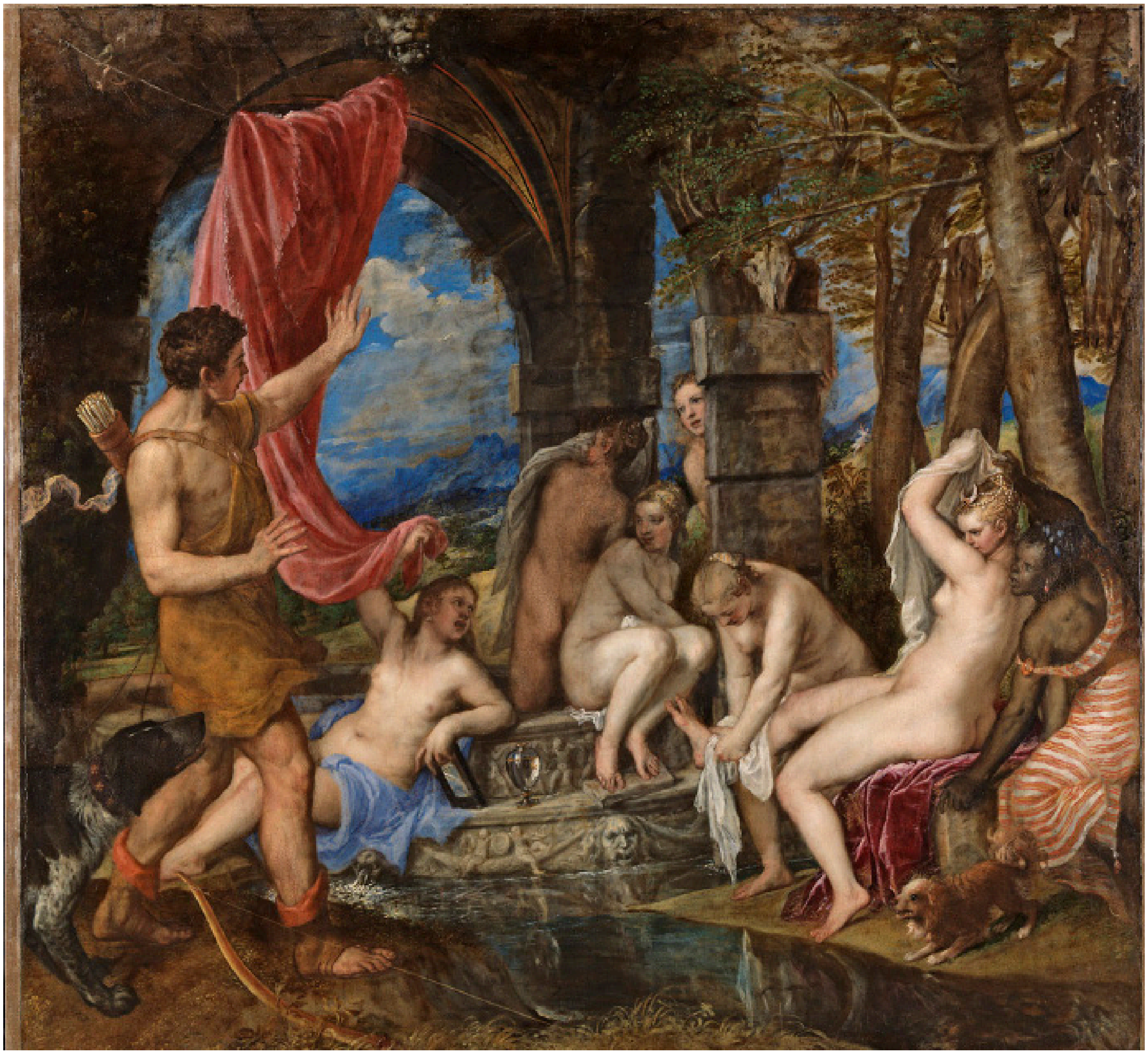
***Pardo Venus or Jupiter and Antiope* by Titian (1506-76)**

As the demands of the Spanish court intensified to include the freedom for all English Catholics to worship, the Infanta's right to insist on a Catholic education for any products of the union, and the repeal of all anti-Catholic laws in England, they finally gave Charles a gift of pictures including the full-length Titian of *Charles V with a hound*. This Machiavellian manoeuvre by the young prince, knowing perfectly well that the marriage would not take place, set a template for his later behaviour of securing art by any means possible.

Along with the other two Titians, this gave Charles a lifelong passion for works of the leading master of the Venetian high Renaissance, and he ultimately owned over 30 works by the artist. Another fine Titian that was signed over to Charles by Royal decree was the *Pardo Venus* or *Jupiter and Antiope*, which later was to weave a chequered path through the Commonwealth sale of Charles's collection. This picture shows a hunting scene on the left with Jupiter on the right having been transformed into a satyr pulling a sheet off an unperturbed and naked Antiope. The hunting scene mimics the 'chase' on the right that has neared its conclusion and leaves little doubt as to Titian's delight in portraying the part of bestial ravishment that is about to occur. A cupid hovers overhead, drawing back an arrow aimed at Antiope.

Charles then tried to secure the remaining Titians from the set to which *Jupiter and Antiope* belongs, known by Titian as his *Poesie* (poetries), originally commissioned by Phillip II. He had the set packed into boxes, but when the marriage deal fell apart the boxes were never sent. Two of these paintings, *Diana and Actaeon* and *Diana and Callisto*, later went to France and then to England after the French revolution of 1798. They have recently been sold by the Duke of Sutherland jointly to the National Gallery of Scotland and Natioanal Gallery of England for £100m.

Charles left Madrid on 9th September 1623, after swearing an oath to marry the Infanta and buying *Our Lady* by Dürer just before he left for £41, as well as antique heads of Faustina, Apollo and Marcus Aurelius.

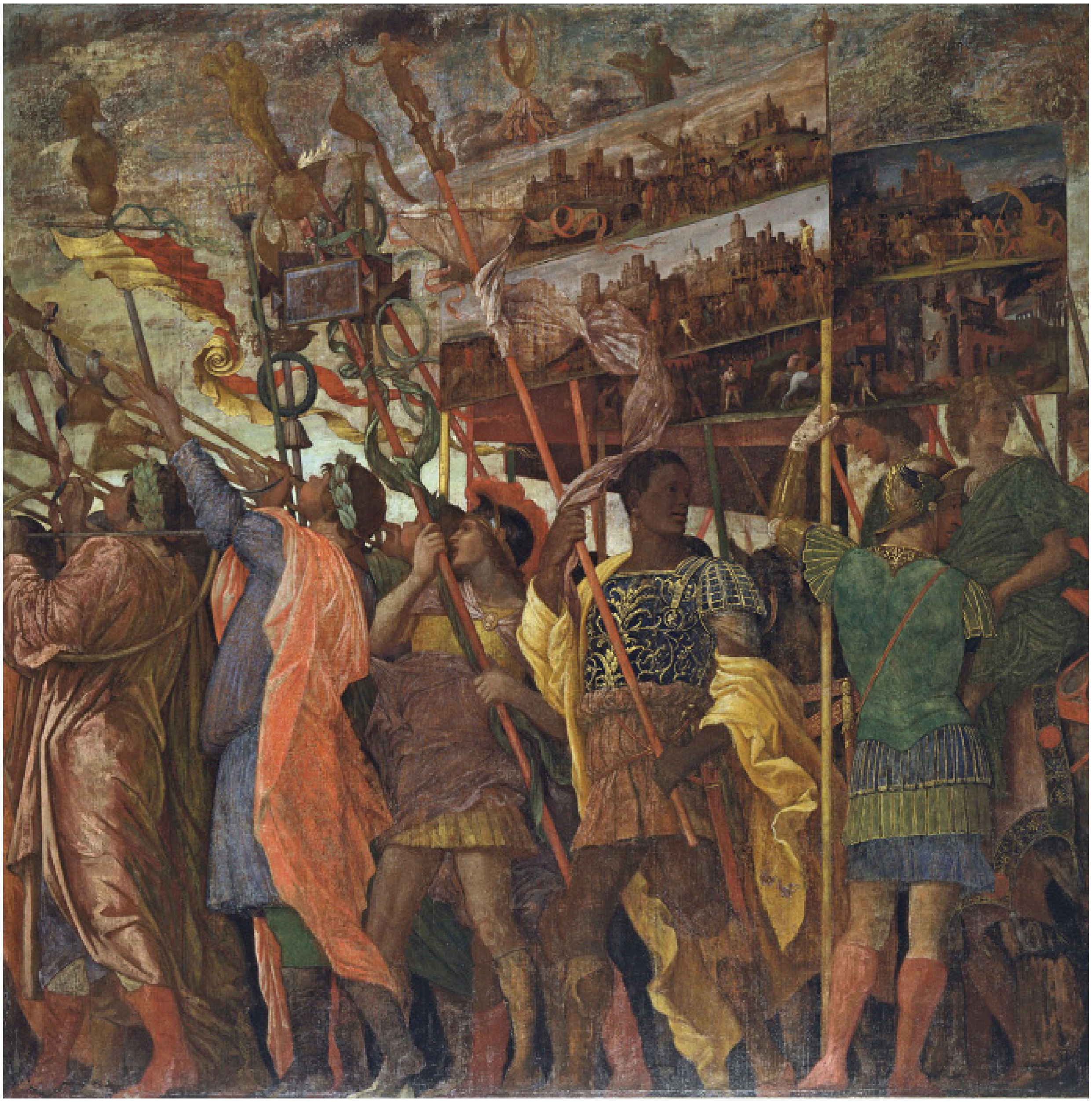


***Diana and Actaeon*, 1556-1559 by Titian. (1506-76)**

Although Buckingham and Charles failed diplomatically, and the Spanish ambassador asked Parliament to execute Buckingham for his behaviour in Madrid, Charles started to build the Royal Collection. As with his flirtations with Spanish princesses and his later marriage to the Catholic Henrietta Maria of France, Charles pursued his art collecting, irrespective of the damage to his standing with the British people. Charles bought the outstanding collection of the Gonzaga rulers of Mantua in 1627 at a cost of £28,000. Although his army was fighting in France in a misguided war that was Buckingham's idea, and £18,000 was needed to continue the siege at La Rochelle, Charles chose to spend public money on artworks.

Although Charles had agreed on £28,000, he actually only paid £18,000. The shortfall of £10,000, at a time when a junior infantry officer earned £15 a year, bankrupted both Daniel Nys and Filippo Burlamachi, the dealer and financier who had organised the sale. The famous collection included Raphael's *Holy Family*, Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* series, Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*, Correggio's *Allegory of Vice and Allegory of Virtue* and assorted works by Giulio Romano, Titian and Guido Reni.

Daniel Nys had withheld some of the finest works including three Titian portraits, a Raphael, and some statues by Michelangelo, Sansovino and one attributed to Praxiteles, perhaps anticipating trouble with payment. It is not clear exactly how this played out because Nys was still declared bankrupt and Burlamachi was incarcerated in debtor's prison by 1641. Abraham van der Doort , Charles's curator, completed an inventory of the Royal Collection in 1639, which listed 124 'Mantua pieces', without Mantegna's Triumphs of Caesar series, which was housed at Hampton Court. Some 190 busts and over 90 statues were installed in the gardens of Greenwich, Somerset House and St James's.



***The Triumphs of Caesar, I: The Picture-Bearers* (*c.* 1484-92) by Andrea Mantegna (1431-1505)**

Charles also attracted European artists to his court such as Peter Paul Rubens who had first arrived in London in 1629 to broker a peace accord between Spain and England. He gave Charles a painting *Allegory of Peace and War* and later returned to paint the ceiling of Inigo Jones's new Banqueting Hall, for which he was not paid until 3 years after completion. Van Dyck, Rubens's pupil, also came to London, and became Charles's court painter, executing the huge equestrian portrait of *Charles I with M. de St Antoine*.

As Charles continued to add to his collection, so did the leading aristocrats of his court. By the time of Arundel’s death, his collection numbered 650 paintings including 37 ascribed to Titian, 20 by Veronese and 13 rather optimistically attributed to Raphael - the only collection to approach the king’s in terms of quality. It became de rigeur for an aspiring aristocrat to collect in order to have some connection with the king and be able to advance at court. Another major collector was James, 3rd Marquess of Hamilton, who in just 2 years between 1636 and 1638 bought 600 paintings, half as large a group as in the Royal Collection.

Charles also bought paintings in partnership with Hamilton and Arundel, such as the collection of Venetian businessman Bartolomeo Della Nave in 1636, which they split four-ways, the fourth partner remaining unknown. A letter written by Charles clarified the terms:

> Whereas we understand that an excellent collection of paintings is to be sold in Venice, which are known by the name of Bartolomeo Della Nave’s collection; we are desirous that our beloved servant, Mr William Petty, should go thither to make the bargain for them; we ourselves being resolved to go a fourth share in the buying of them, so it exceed not the sum of eight hundred pounds sterling; but that our name be concealed in it. And if, please God that the same collection be bought and come here safely hither, then we do promise, in the word of a King, that they shall be divided with all equality in this manner, videlicet - that they shall be equally divided into four parts by some men skilful in paintings, and then everyone interested in the shares, or some of them, shall throw dice severally; and, whosoever throws most, shall choose after first, as he casts most, and shall take their shares freely to their own uses, as they shall fall to them.[7]

Charles and his court bought quality irrespective of some of the ‘popish imagery’ supportive of the Catholic monarchs of Europe. Although Charles kept his collection hidden from public view, his collecting of pictures with Catholic or licentious subject matter, and his spending of huge sums, made the puritan English population uneasy. The influx of Italian pictures, along with Henrietta Maria’s commissioning of a private Catholic chapel at Somerset House, was regarded by the general population as a drift towards Catholicism.

Charles believed in the ‘divine right of Kings’ and, as such, he was answerable to no one except God. This did not sit well with Parliament, who tried to control him. Parliament objected to Charles's levying of taxes without parliamentary approval, imposing martial law on civilians, interfering in religious matters and imprisoning civilians without due process. In 1628 Charles dissolved Parliament and ruled without it for 11 years in what came to be known as the, '11-year tyranny.'

The king also tried to introduce a new prayer book. Based on the *English Book of Common Prayer*, in Scotland, it led to war. After a defeat in Scotland, Charles recalled Parliament in 1639 to raise money for his war. Parliament used their reformation to impose restraints on Charles, which led to their passing a bill, the 'Grand Remonstrance' in 1641, which listed their grievances. When rumours reached Charles that Parliament was intending to impeach his Catholic Queen, Henrietta Maria, war broke out between the two parties, instigating the English Civil War.

Charles raised the royal standard at Nottingham on 22nd August 1642. A series of defeats, including the battles of Edgehill and Naseby, culminated with Charles's surrender in 1647. Charles then escaped and instigated the second round of the Civil War before his final defeat at the battle of Preston in 1648. After this second round the attitude of the 'New Model Army' and its commander, Oliver Cromwell, hardened against him.

Seven years of civil war had impoverished the country. The army rapidly brought Parliament under control by expelling all MPs hostile to its radical views. A moderate wing of Parliament wanted to reinstate Charles, but give him less power. Under Cromwell's orders Colonel Pride threw out those MPs sympathetic to Charles and the rigged Parliament passed legislation that put Charles on trial for treason.

Charles was tried but refused to enter a plea, claiming quite rightly in legal terms that the Parliament as it stood had no right to try him. His refusal to plead or defend himself was taken as pro confesso or an admission of guilt and he was executed on Tuesday, 30th January 1649. Fifty-nine of the commissioners signed his death warrant. Charles wore two shirts, as shivering might be seen as a sign of cowardice, one final act of bravery.

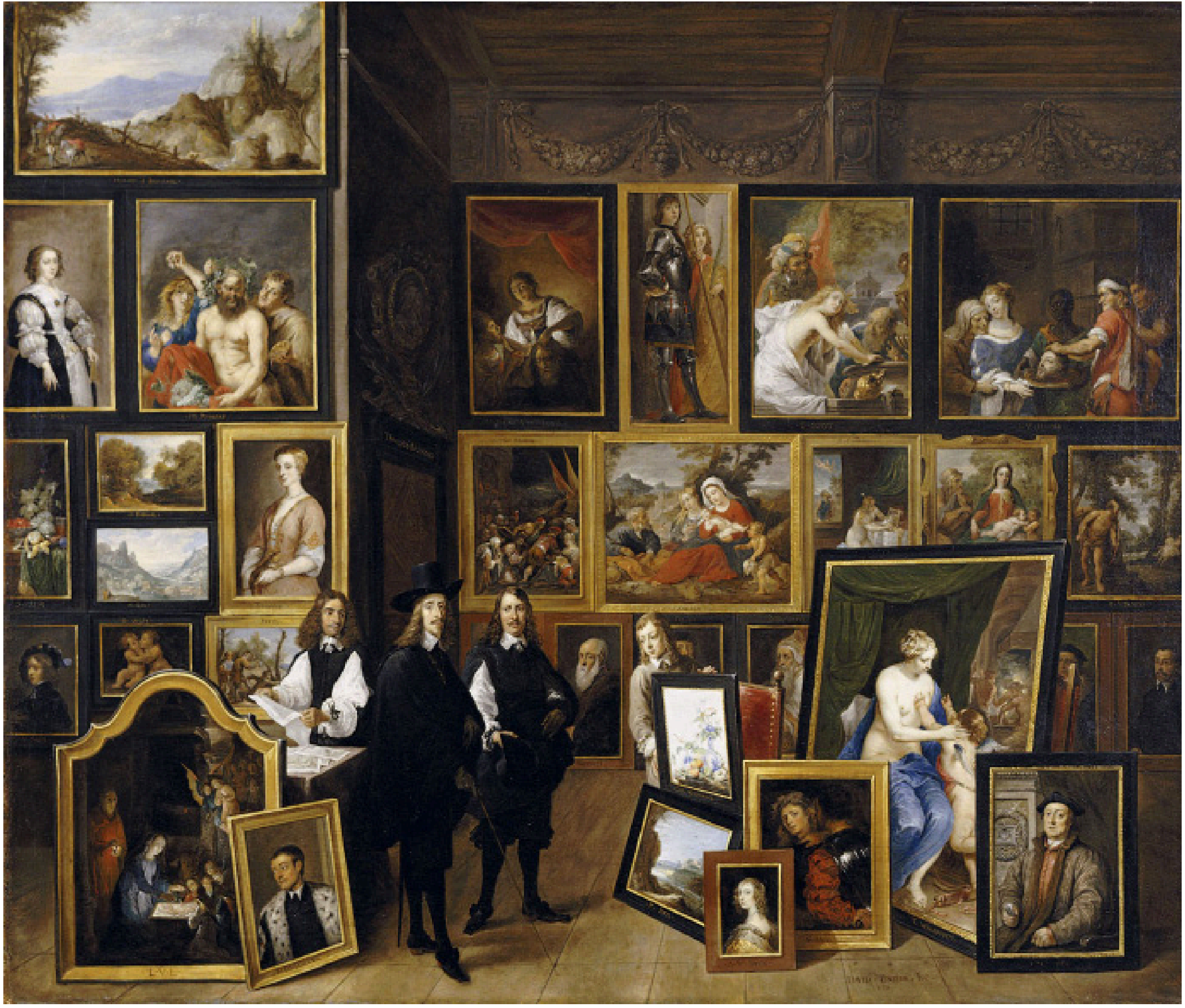
Soon after the execution, demand arose for reparations from those who had lost their livelihood in the conflict, war widows and the king's creditors who had been unpaid since the war had started. The new Rump Parliament also needed to finance rebuilding a navy to defend England from invasion by Royalist forces. The king's art collection was the obvious target. As Charles had identified his reign and royal authority so closely with his art collection, selling it off and allowing his subjects to buy such items destroyed the art's mystique and weakened the whole concept of royalty. On 26th June 1649 the Rump Parliament passed 'An Act for sale of the goods and personal estate of the late King Charles, and to his wife and eldest son, have been, and are justly forfeited by them for their several Delinquencies... (the goods) shall be inventoried and apprized, and shall also be sold, except such parcels thereof as shall be found necessary for uses of state.'

When people entered the palace of Whitehall to remove items to Somerset House for the sale of the century, it was the first time commoners had ever been inside a palace. Itinerant poets, drapers, skinners, brewers, hatters, carpenters and other working men were soon wandering around the opulent interiors of Whitehall and the other palaces surrounded by tapestries, gold and silver plate and paintings by Raphael, Titian, Van Dyck and Correggio. It was a moment in British history, comparable to scenes in Paris after the French Revolution. With republican zeal they inventoried: - candlesticks, chamber pots, basins, ewers, plate and cutlery, cushions, clocks, globes, carpets, tapestries, paintings, beds, swords, armour, curtains and furniture. Contemporary accounts describe awe interspersed with shock at the sheer scale of possessions amassed by the late king.

The appointed sale trustees had to value everything and did not know the value of the paintings. The only guide they had was the 1639 inventory complied by van der Doort before the Civil War, providing descriptions but no values. With the artworks given to Charles as gifts they had to assess paintings never valued before. All the Royal residences were inventoried, including: - Syon House, Oatlands, Kenilworth Castle, Windsor Castle, Richmond Palace, Nonsuch Palace, Tower of London, Carisbrooke Castle, Greenwich, Hampton Court and St James's Palace, as well as Whitehall.

The leading aristocratic collectors and royalist sympathisers rapidly smuggled their collections out of the country. Losing these collections was as damaging to the English National patrimony as the loss of the finest pictures from the king's collection. Buckingham had been assassinated in 1628 but his son, born in the same year, managed to send 16 chests and 200 paintings to the Netherlands in 1646, where he sold them to Archduke Leopold William of Austria for 60,000 florins. The Archduke also bought much of the Duke of Hamilton's collection, which was confiscated by Cromwell after Hamilton was executed for treason on 9th March 1649. The

Archduke's collection forms the core of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, where most of these pictures can still be found.

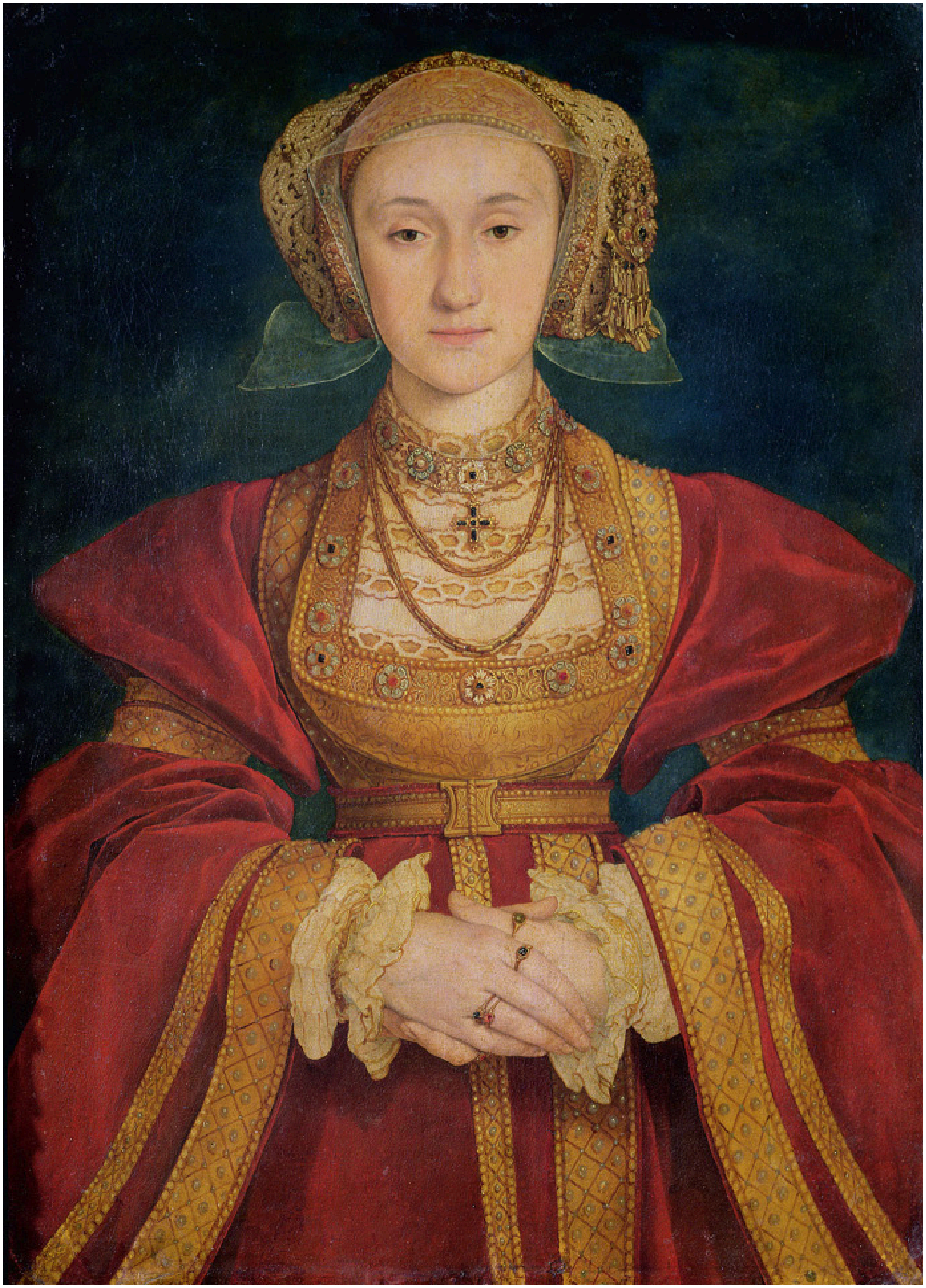


***Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in his Picture Gallery*, with the artist and other figures by David Teniers, the Younger (1610-1690)**

The Earl of Northumberland, a political survivor, who managed to flourish under Charles I, Cromwell and Charles II, assisted the young Duke of Buckingham in getting his paintings out of the country and took, as a fee, Titian's painting of *Cardinal Georges d'Armagnac with his secretary*, which remains at Alnwick Castle to this day.

Arundel escorted Henrietta Maria abroad in 1641 with 60 cases of his collection and started selling the artworks to raise money for Charles II in exile. He died a broken man in Parma in 1645, leaving his son and grandson fighting over the collection. An inventory of the remainder of the collection was drawn up in 1654 and the agent of the Spanish ambassador acquired 56 Venetian paintings including eight paintings by Veronese, most of which are in the Prado museum today. In 1662, Eberard Jabach, a leading dealer of the time and a former agent of Arundel's, bought parts of the collection including Holbein's *Anne of Cleves* and *William Warham* and Giorgione's *Concert Champetre*, which he sold to Louis XVI, and these pictures are today in the Louvre.

The king's goods and pictures were laid out at Somerset House, given a price and initially anyone could walk in off the street and buy something. The Puritans were delighted with progress, but there was a sense of unease about the whole affair among large elements of the British population. In July 1649 John Crouch published his satire entitled *A Tragi-Comedy, called New Market Fayre or a Parliament Out-Cry of State - Commodities Set to Sale*, which mocked the trustees and their detailed inventories and attacked them for putting all the king's possession up for sale. Crouch predicted that the sale would be corrupt: 'Here is Grafton, and Belcalf [Belcamp] that intend to steal half.'[8] As the coaches continued to arrive at Somerset house, the former home of Henrietta Maria, the workmen, who had no concept of how to treat artworks, frequently damaged the paintings, smashed the sculptures and tore the tapestries.



Anne of Cleves **(1515-57) by Hans Holbein, the Younger.**

It was not a fortuitous moment for such a sale as the country was in recession after seven years of civil war and few people had any money. The sale was poorly organised, with pictures stacked, and it was very hard for buyers to find anything specific.

Reports of this treasure trove began to filter around Europe and the first buyers started to arrive. It was not a fire sale and prices varied from low to high, due to the lack of knowledge on the part of the trustees arranging the pricing. The Dutch diplomat Lodewijck Huygens visited London several months after the sale started and wrote in his journal:

> We went to Somerset House again and saw a number of beautiful things, among them the most costly tapestries I ever saw. One room was valued at £300. In that same room were many antique and modern statues, although nearly all damaged. There was a unicorn cane as thick as an arm, with a huge crystal knob. In the gallery above we saw a very large number of beautiful paintings, but all so badly cared for and so dusty it was a pitiable sight. There was an admirable portrait by Van Dyck of King Charles sitting on a white horse which could be obtained for £150 (Van Dyck had tried to charge Charles £200 for it and received £100). Five or six Titians, however, surpassed everything there, and yet these also could be purchased at a very reasonable price.[9]

The first buyers were well-connected officers from the ‘New Model Army’ who realised that there was a chance to make a fortune. An early buyer was Colonel William Webb who had had a ‘good’ Civil War and been rewarded with the title of Surveyor-General of crown and church lands confiscated by the new state. On 20th October he attended the sale and acquired his first painting, A Naked Venus Asleep by Isaac Oliver for £6.

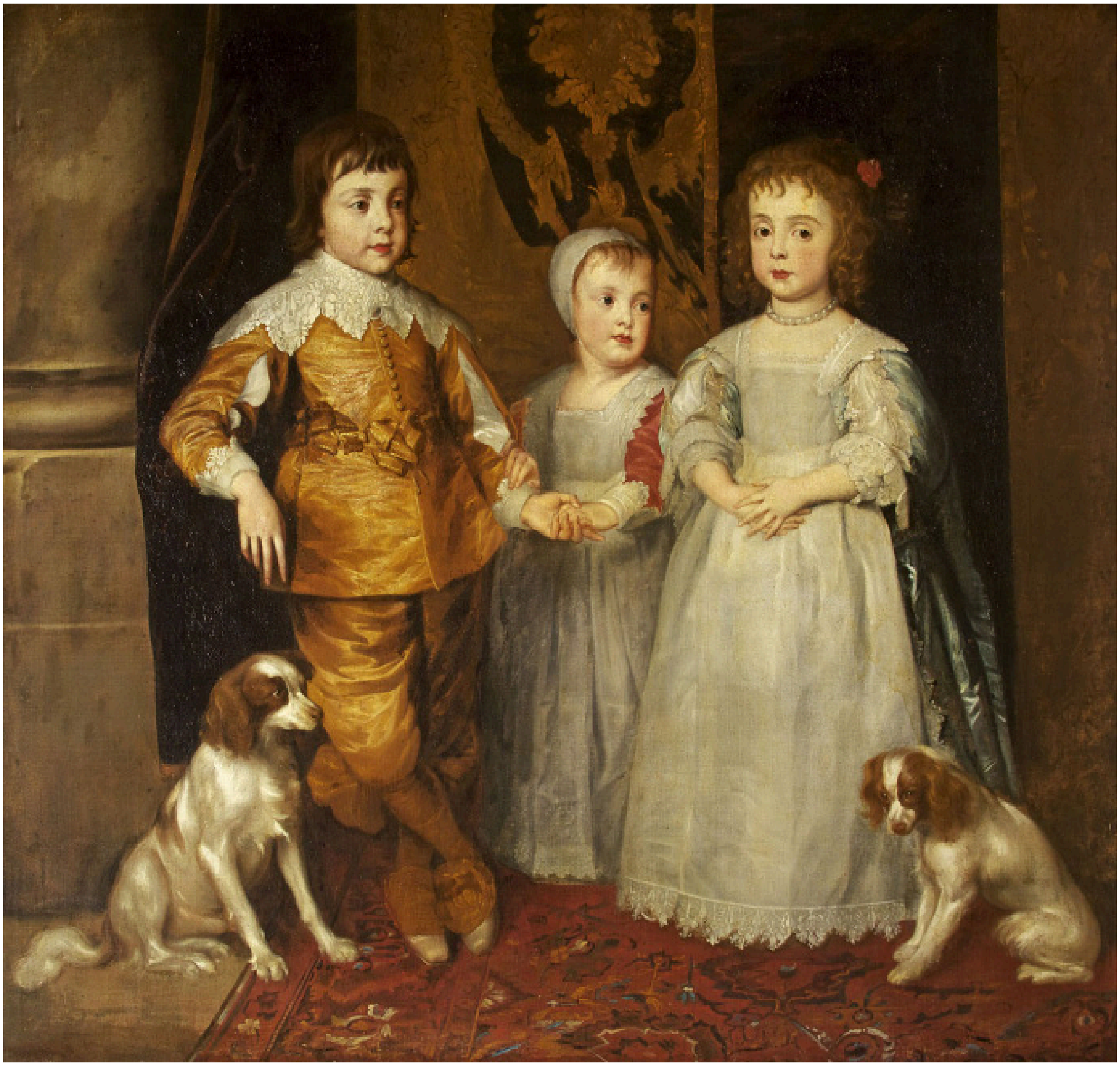
Army officers, losing their previous puritan rage over Charles’s popish and debauched tastes, rapidly realised such subject matter was rather alluring. Five days later, Webb spent the enormous sum of £200 on paintings including a Titian of *Lucretia and Tarquin* for £70 and two Van Dycks with the surprising subject matter of ‘Prince Charles in Armour’ for £25 and *The Three Eldest Children of Charles I* for £60.

Webb showed considerable financial acumen in buying Titians and Van Dycks with Charles as subject matter as such subjects were out of favour. He gambled correctly on their quality soon overcoming their subject matter. Webb also acquired further Van Dycks and Giulio Romanos from Charles’s

Mantuan purchase and Palma Vecchio's *Virgin and Child* with St Sebastian on which he spent £135. Since an army officer's wage was £15 per annum and Webb spent £1302 in just a few weeks, he was clearly acting for a consortium of buyers who did not want to be seen benefiting from the late king's misfortune, but badly wanted his paintings. One of Webb's backers was Viscount Lisle, who built a collection of 700 paintings that he kept at his London residence, Sheen House.

Sir Peter Lely, who later became court painter to Charles II, spent £92 in April 1650 on four paintings including a Tintoretto and *The Finding of Moses* by Veronese. Lely's assistant, the Fleming, Jan Baptist Gaspars, bought 55 lesser paintings for £1073. An assistant to Van Dyck and a skilful copyist, Remigius van Leemput, used his knowledge of the Royal Collection to buy 35 paintings and sculpture over a 6-month period.

Colonel John Hutchinson, a close ally of Cromwell's, who had defended Nottingham castle against the Royalists and was a signatory to Charles's death warrant, started to buy. He also sat on the committee involved in reserving royal goods for state use and later helped Cromwell decide what he should keep from the Royal Collection to furnish his own palaces when he became Lord Protector of England in 1653. Unlike Webb, who was fronting a syndicate, Hutchinson was buying for his own pleasure and for speculation, and he proved to have a finely tuned dealer's instinct on both what to buy and when to sell.



The Three Eldest Children of Charles I **(Mary, Princess of Orange; James II; Charles II) after Sir Anthony van Dyck.**

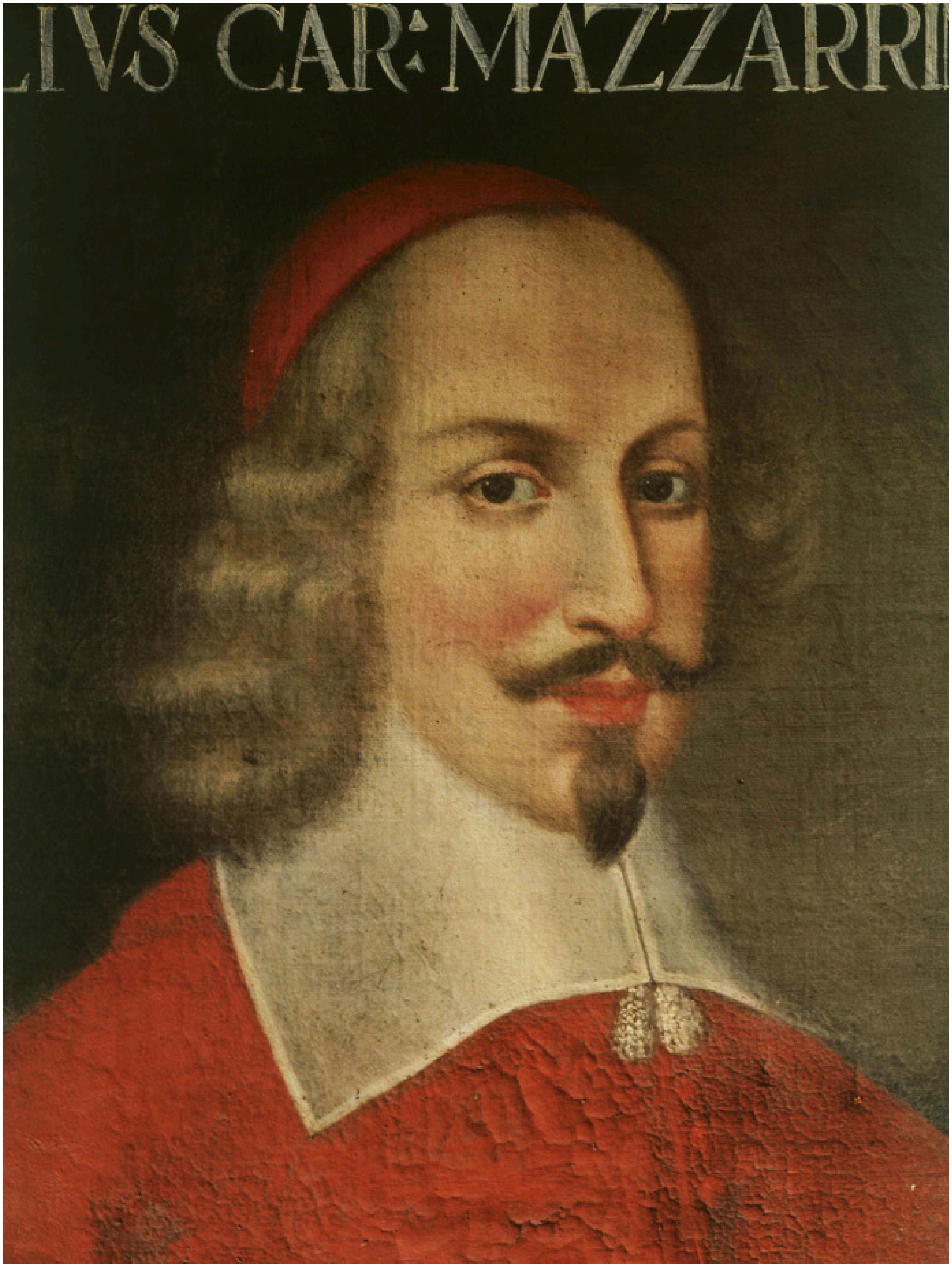
Hutchinson’s wife Lucy later recalled in Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson:

> The only recreation he had during his residence in London was in seeking out all the rare artists he could heare of, and in considering their workses in paintings, sculptures, gravings, and in all other curiosities, insomuch that he became a greate virtuoso and patrone of ingenuity. Being loath that the land should disfurnisht of all the rarioties that were in it ... he laid out about two thousand in the choicest pieces of painting, most of which were bought out of the king’s goods, which were given to their servants to pay their wages; to them the colonel gave ready money, and bought so good pennyworths, that they were valued much

> more than thye cost. These he brought down into the country, intending a very neat cabinet for them.[10]

This shows a wife proud of her husband's connoisseurship, his striking of a good bargain, his keeping the national patrimony of England within England and his helping the king's creditors by giving them cash. Whether Colonel Hutchinson saw his acquisitions in quite so altruistic a light is unknown.

Like Webb, Hutchinson had no qualms about buying lascivious subject matter as he attended the sale every few weeks, carefully choosing his purchases. In one day Hutchinson paid the staggering sum for an army officer of £930 for three Titians including *Venus and Cupid with an Organist* and Charles's prize possession that he had brought back from Madrid, the erotically charged and voluptuous *Pardo Venus*, for which he paid £600. The *Pardo Venus*, having hung in the Escorial outside of Madrid and in the Second Privy Room in Whitehall Palace now made its way down to the modest surroundings of Hutchinson's estate in Nottinghamshire.


LIVS CAR: MAZZARRI

***Cardinal Jules Mazarin* (1602-61), Unknown artist.**

Hutchinson spent £1,349 on 23 paintings before retiring from the sale in June 1650. With his prizes secure in Nottinghamshire and having bought what he considered, correctly, to be the most sought-after paintings in the royal courts of Europe, Hutchinson settled down to see what buyers would emerge. When the competition between the French and the Spanish courts and Archduke Leopold Wilhelm was at its highest, Hutchinson sold his Titians for vast profits. He sold the *Venus and Cupid with an Organist*, for which he had paid £165, to the painter David Teniers acting on behalf of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm for £600 and in 1653, entered into negotiations over the *Pardo Venus* with Cardinal Mazarin's agent, Antoine de Bordeaux-Neufville.

Bordeaux first heard of the picture in October 1653 and he wrote excitedly to Mazarin, 'the finest piece remaining here is in possession of a colonel; but he has a very high price on it…but the colonel selling it does not wish to come down from the £6000 it actually cost him.'[11] Some more-detailed research would have revealed to Bordeaux that Hutchinson had paid £600 for the painting. Bordeaux's advisers, probably on commission from Hutchinson, 'esteemed it highly' and pushed him to a hurried completion. Although the price of £6,000 pounds was agreed on the 18th December, 3 days later Bordeaux wrote:

> A Venus given by the King of Spain to the late King of England, a work by Titian, fairly well preserved, very large, and generally held to be a great piece. So as not to lose it, I was today obliged to finalise the purchase of £7,000 pounds; this is £1,000 pounds more than has been intimated to me, but in fact the same price at which it was sold to this army officer after the death of the King. I have promised 2,000 pounds for Monday and the remainder three weeks later.[12]

This was one of the final purchases before Cromwell was appointed Lord Protector and halted the sale.

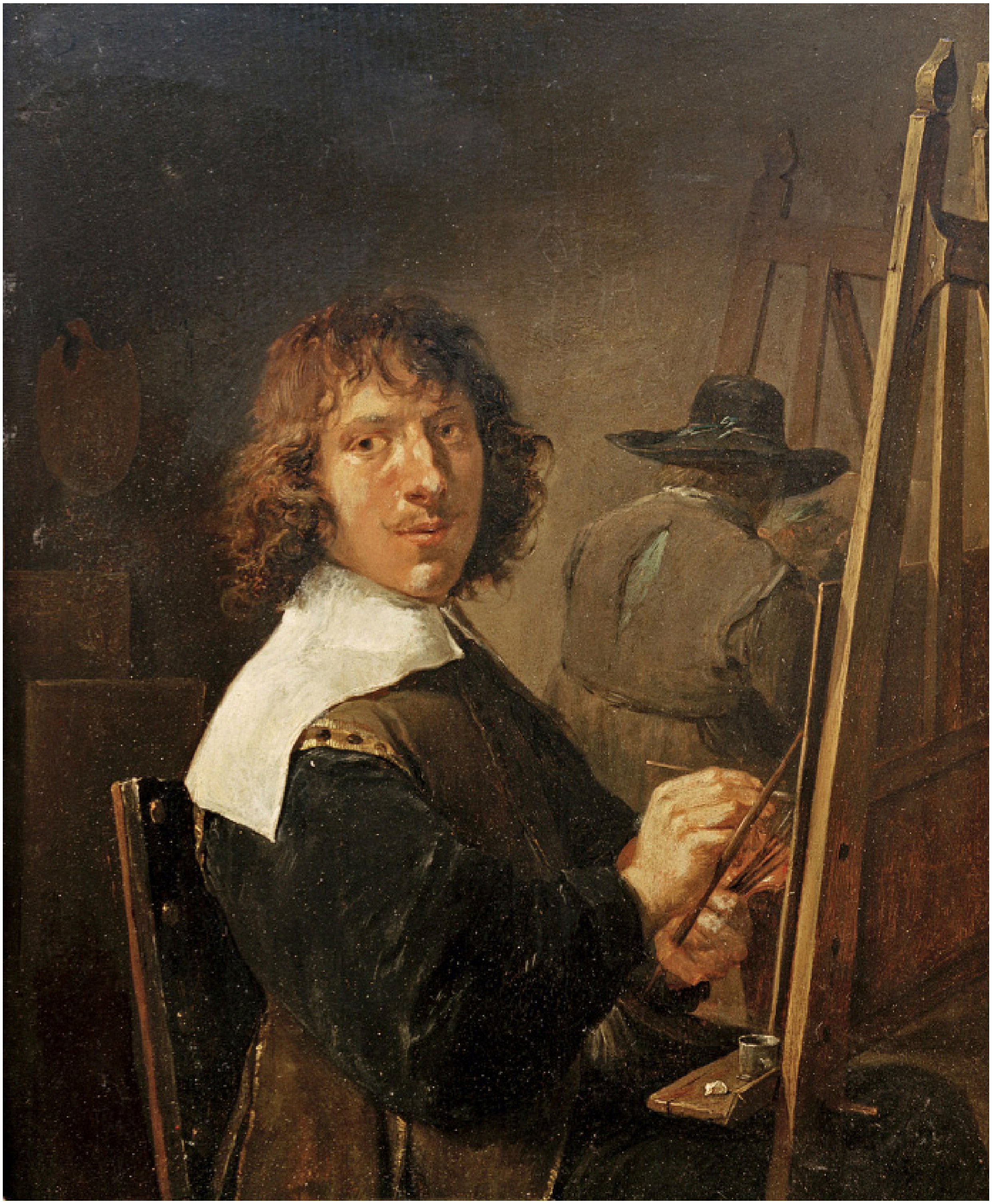
Other buyers were cannier than Bordeaux. The Spanish ambassador Don Alonso de Cardenas struck hard bargains and bought well for his master, Philip IV of Spain. The six or seven paintings acquired by Bordeaux on behalf of Mazarin by the end of 1653 cost more than Cardenas had spent on nearly ten times the number of masterpieces he had acquired over the previous 4 years. Cardenas had arrived in England as a diplomat in 1635 speaking little English and had no prior experience of art or its acquisition. When he advised Philip of Spain in 1645 that there was to be a sale of the king’s goods, Philip gave the instruction to buy paintings, ‘which may be originals by Titian, Paolo Veronese, or other old paintings of distinction’ and to avoid letting, ‘it be known that you are acquiring them for me.’[13]

In December 1649 Cardenas drew up a wish list with descriptions of over 40 of the finest paintings in the Royal Collection amassed by Charles over 30 years including masterpieces from Madrid, Mantua and Rome and works he had commissioned from artists like Rubens and Van Dyck. Having familiarised himself with the tastes of the Spanish Hapsburg Emperor, the list consisted entirely of sixteenth-century Italian artists, except for two Van Dycks, and focused particularly on Raphael, Titian and Correggio. Cardenas quickly learned to distinguish the highest quality and constantly sought out the best advice. He proved a perfect choice for Philip as he navigated a successful path through the treacherous art world of the short-lived English Commonwealth.

Because sales were slow, the Rump Parliament published two lists in which paintings were allocated to specific debtors of Charles. This system was fraught with problems as a mass of tradesmen sprang forward exaggerating their debts to the late king. A ‘first list’ was mainly of those widowed and orphaned by the recent Civil War and the king’s servants. A ‘second list’ drawn up in October 1651 allocated 700 paintings directly to Charles’s creditors and led to an assortment of tailors, carpenters, painters, cutlers and musicians being given paintings by Dürer, Rubens, Van Dyck, Raphael and Titian. Ordinary Londoners could now hold, examine and trade in masterpieces. Many formed syndicates and let one member of the syndicate hold the artworks and act as negotiator on their behalf.

Cardenas found himself negotiating with these syndicates, but he rapidly saw the potential for fraud and when the sale was suspended at one point wrote, ‘It would seem that they have greatly defrauded the state and altered the valuations for their own benefit by having entered what has been sold at a lower price than the purchase price.’[14] When the sale resumed, Cardenas continued buying. The second list formed 14 syndicates or dividends, each headed up by a representative, who were allocated £70,000 of goods. Some 684 paintings were valued at just over £20,000 and the painter, Emanuel de Critz, found himself fronting three of the dividends with responsibility for £15,000-worth of royal possessions and 154 paintings valued at £3000. As well as paintings by Van Dyck, Correggio and Titian, he also controlled eight statues, including Bernini’s bust of Charles.

David Teniers arrived at this moment, also acting on behalf of the Spanish Court, and provided further competition for Cardenas. Teniers managed to secure over 40 paintings and 10 tapestries, buying more in a week than Cardenas had acquired in the previous 2 years. Teniers bought at least ten pictures from the Royal Collection as well as from other royalist collections such as that of Lord Pembroke. Teniers bought eight Veroneses, five attributed to Titian and other works by del Sarto, Bassano, Guido Reni, Palma Vecchio, Rubens and Van Dyck.



Self-Portrait **(1635-7) by David Teniers (1610-1690)**

Spurred on by Teniers, Cardenas bought the series of 12 Titians of Roman Emperors over which he had been prevaricating for two years. Cardenas also bought two Dürers for £75 and Titian's *Lady in a Fur Wrap*, the erotic painting that had so captivated the young Charles on his visit to Madrid, for an undisclosed sum. Cardenas negotiated with the heads of the dividends, whilst Teniers left for Brussels. Cardenas was often to be found at De Critz's modest lodgings in Austin Friars in the Broad Street ward of London, which housed an extraordinary collection of Giorgiones, Correggios, Titians, Bruegels and Van Dycks.

Another dividend was fronted by Charles's former wood monger, Edmund Harrison, and in early 1652 Cardenas purchased eight masterpieces from him including a *Venus* by Guido Reni, the *Allocution of the Marquis of Vasto* and *Pope Alexander* by Titian and the *Allegory of Peace and War* by Rubens.

Whilst Cardenas, Teniers, Bordeaux and others were involved in acquiring the finest of Charles's paintings in a web of double dealing, shifting allegiances and intrigue, Cromwell was at the head of the 'New Model Army', pacifying Ireland (1649-1650) and Scotland (1650-1651). Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) was born into the middle gentry and spent his first 40 years as a yeoman farmer. Around 1638 he underwent a religious conversion, from being 'the chief of sinners.' His letters from this period are full of biblical references and indicate that [he] felt the reformation had not gone far enough, that much of England was living in sin and that Catholicism needed to be eradicated from the country.

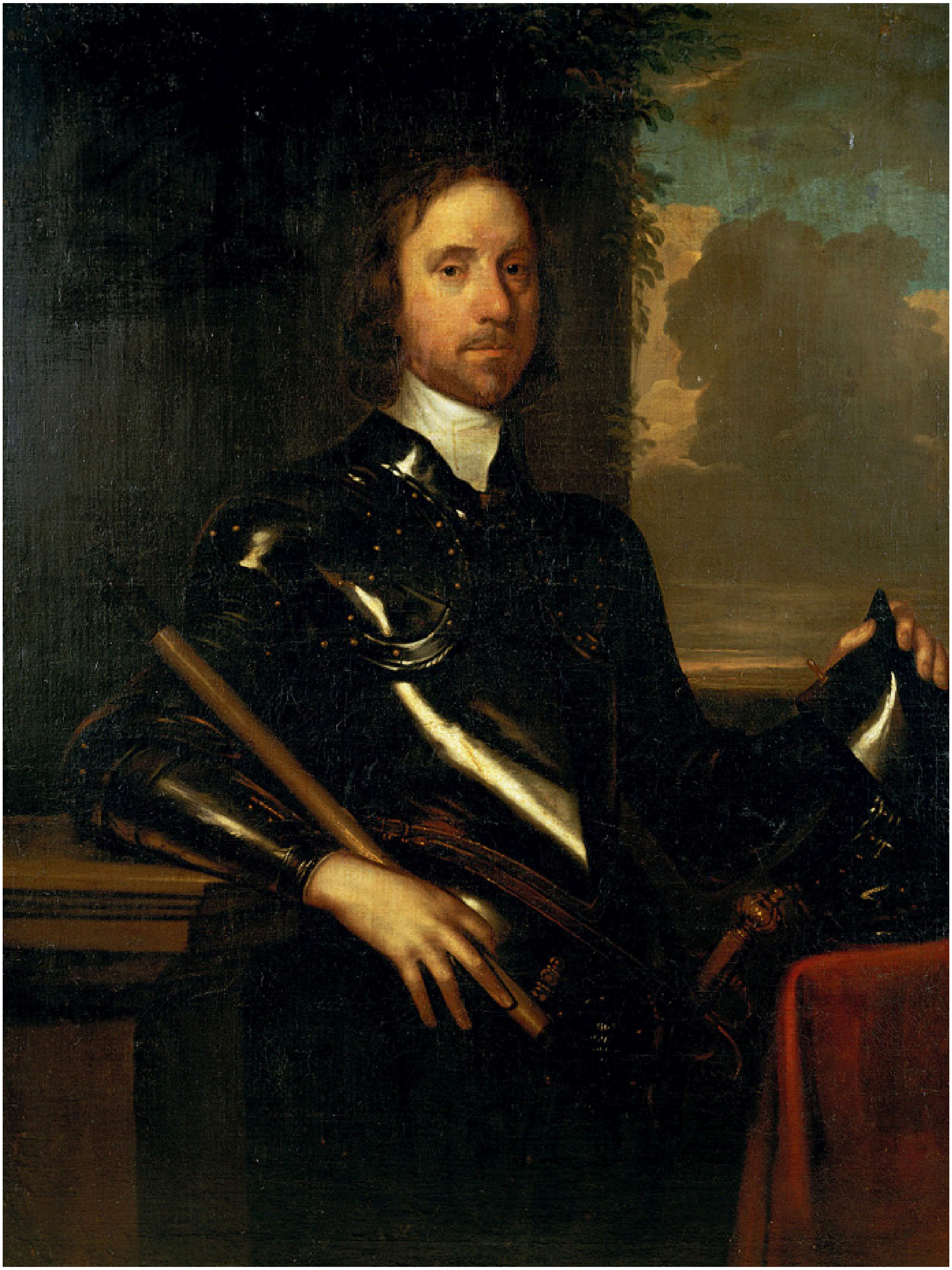
Minerva Protects Pax from Mars **(Peace and War) by Peter Paul Rubens (1629-30).**

Cromwell became an MP for Huntingdon in 1628-1629 before Charles dissolved Parliament for 11 years. He served again from 1640-1642, before religion and tax issues between the king and parliament, led to the Civil War. Cromwell, aged 43, had only had experience of local county militia, but established himself as an outstanding commander in the 'New Model Army' of the parliamentary forces. He rose to Lieutenant General of Horse by the battle of Marston Moor in July 1644, where he was wounded in the head. After two periods of civil war, Charles's forces were finally defeated at the battle of Preston where Cromwell, in command of an army of 9000, defeated a Scottish army of twice that size.

Cromwell saw himself as a soldier of God and started quoting psalms on his return to Parliament. After the battle of Preston, a study of Psalms 17 and 105 led him to tell Parliament that, 'they that remain implacable and will not leave troubling the land may be speedily destroyed out of the land.' In December 1648 Cromwell instigated 'Pride's Purge' whereby Colonel Thomas Pride threw out all those members of Parliament who were advocating a return of the king under reduced circumstances, so he could push for execution and, perhaps, pave the way for his own accession to power. Cromwell was one of the signatories to the king’s death warrant and instrumental in passing the act that put the king’s goods up for sale. He pushed for a quick seizure of the king’s assets, alarmed that the collections of Arundel and Buckingham had already been smuggled out of the country. He issued a warning that, ‘divers goods belonging to the state are in danger to be embezzled.’

Again, perhaps with an eye to his future role as head of state, he helped draft the act and included a provision that the new elite would be allowed to cherry-pick from the late king’s provisions insisting that, ‘it be referred to the Council of State to consider and direct, what parcels of the goods and personal estates aforesaid are to be reserved for the use of the State.’[15] Mindful of Cromwell’s warning, the Commons rapidly made an inventory of the king’s goods before they had even drafted the bill.

Meanwhile the Royalists had regrouped in Ireland and signed a treaty with the Irish Confederate Catholics. Cromwell was despatched by the Rump Parliament to Ireland in July 1649. Cromwell’s hostility to the Irish was political and religious. He loathed the Catholic Church, which he blamed for imagined tyranny and persecution of Protestants in Europe, and waged a 9-month campaign of exceptional brutality. At the siege of Drogheda in September 1649 his troops massacred 3,500 people after the town’s capitulation, including 2,700 Royalist troops, civilians, prisoners and Roman Catholic priests. Following Cromwell’s conquest, the public practice of Catholicism was banned and Catholic priests were murdered. Around 12,000 people were sold into slavery and mainly exported to work on plantations in the West Indies.



***Oliver Cromwell* (1599 -1658) by Robert Walker. (1607-1660)**

In 1650-1651 Cromwell turned to Scotland, where the Scots proclaimed support for Charles's son, Charles II. Cromwell smashed the Scots at the battle of Dunbar, killing 4000 soldiers, taking another 10,000 prisoner and capturing Edinburgh. At the battle of Worcester on 3rd September 1651, the Scots resistance was destroyed and Scotland was ruled from England during the Commonwealth. Back in London, Cromwell tried to expel corruption from the Rump Parliament but did exactly what he had castigated Charles for, and dismissed them by force on 20th April 1653 claiming, 'You are no parliament, I say you are no parliament; I will put an end to your sitting.'[16] He snatched up the mace, the symbol of power, and demanded that the 'bauble be taken away.'[17]

Power briefly devolved to a parliament known as the 'Barebones Parliament' before Cromwell dissolved them also on 12th December 1653. A new constitution was then drawn up, which made Cromwell Lord Protector of England for life to undertake, 'the chief magistracy and administration of government' and he was sworn in on 16th December 1653 with a huge salary of £100,000 per annum. Although in effect he was the new king, Cromwell was careful to avoid wearing monarchical regalia at his investiture. However, he rapidly adopted a new signature of 'Oliver P', mimicking the style of the English monarchs, and did not object to being called, 'Your highness.'

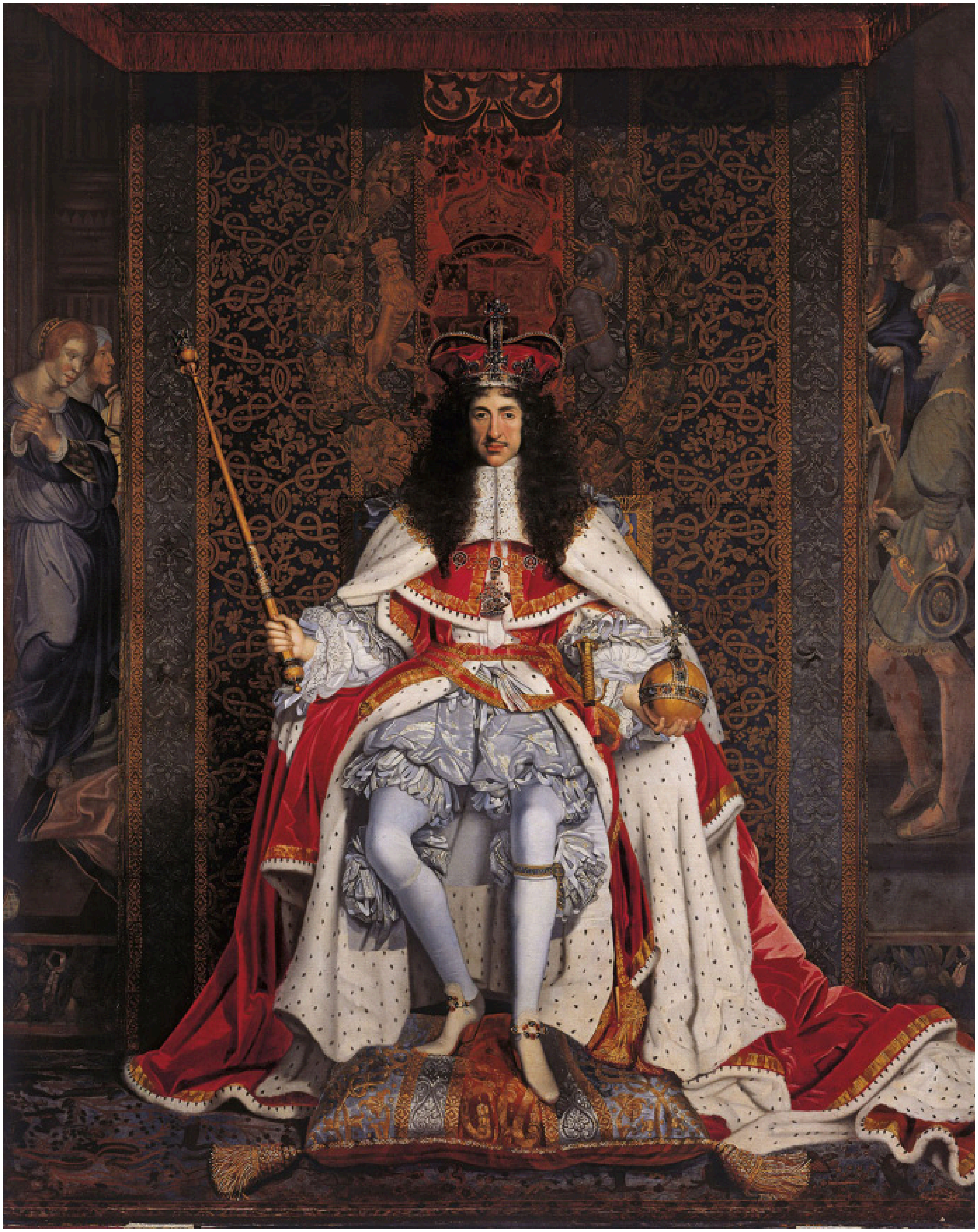
Cromwell ensured his position was hereditary and was later briefly succeeded by his son. However, when offered the crown as king in March 1657, he declined, perhaps aware of the hypocrisy of accepting it. As Protector he could call or dissolve Parliament, and although obliged to seek a majority vote for his laws, it would have taken a brave man to have opposed him. When Parliament proposed a programme of constitutional reform not to his liking, he dissolved it on 22nd January 1655 rather than oppose it.

As Lord Protector, one of Cromwell's first priorities was to create a suitable place to live surrounded by artworks commensurate with his new status. Having railed against the king's lifestyle and possessions, he tried to achieve something similar for himself. He stopped the sale of the late king's goods. Bordeaux and Cardenas rapidly sent their remaining acquisitions abroad before they were repossessed by the Commonwealth, and Bordeaux wrote wistfully to Cardinal Mazarin, 'All the sales of the King's goods and tapestries are to be halted until further notice.'[18] In August Parliament requested an inventory of what remained, demanding, ‘what goods are sold, and what yet remains unsold, and where and in whose hands those goods remain, and how the proceeds of that hath been sold and disposed of.’[19]

Although many of the finest pictures had been sold, a number of the best tapestries remained because of their size and the difficulties in their transportation. Cardinal Mazarin, who had come to the sale relatively late through his agent Bordeaux, wanted some of the best tapestries. Bordeaux hoped that the Commonwealth would continue to allow the sale of the tapestries, but Mazarin observed acutely, ‘Do not concern yourself any longer with the tapestries for assuredly they will be of use to the protector.’[20] Bordeaux continued to buy paintings from private buyers, but Cardenas was expelled from London when Cromwell declared war on Spain in October 1655.

Cromwell quickly surrounded himself with the trappings of royal power. His portrait was hung in the Royal Exchange alongside previous kings of England, including a portrait of Charles with his head still on. He spent weekdays at Whitehall and weekends at Hampton Court; both palaces were redecorated and £35,000-worth of furniture and works of art allocated. Cromwell tasked Clement Kinnersley, Charles’s former Yeoman of the King’s Wardrobe, with requisitioning and maintaining the state’s art collection. Tapestries to the value of £33,000 were placed in the two palaces. Cromwell was not interested in pictures, although he was not a hater of images. He believed tapestries created a better regal ambience than the paintings. The tapestries remain in the Royal Collection to this day, whereas many more paintings were lost to private buyers or simply disappeared.

Fewer than 30 paintings valued at less than £2000 pounds were reserved by Cromwell for his use but the choice was limited as many of the finest pieces had already been sold off. It appears Cromwell left the choice to Sir Gilbert Pickering who, as a former director of the Mortlake tapestry factory was more inclined towards tapestries anyway. The most important paintings hung in Whitehall were Mantegna’s *Triumphs of Caesar*, which Charles had bought from the Gonzagas in the Mantuan deal. Cromwell most probably identified with these paintings as they depict Caesar returning from his campaigns with the spoils of war and marching in triumph through Rome. A triumph was granted by the Senate in Ancient Rome to a conquering general who had killed at least 5000 of the enemy, captured or killed their leader and removed enough artworks to make the procession impressive. Cromwell qualified on all counts. The poet Marchmont Needham even suggested that Cromwell was greater than Caesar, writing, ‘Let the barbarian greatness of Caesar be silent,’ because, ‘one greater than Caesar is present.’[21]



Charles II **(1630-85) by John Michael Wright (1617-94)**

Cromwell remained Lord Protector until his death on 3rd September 1658, when he was briefly succeeded by his son Richard, who proved incapable of the task. His full state funeral was based on that of James I in Westminster Abbey. His body remained there until exhumed by Charles II in 1661, who had it decapitated before hanging the body in chains at Tyburn. Cromwell's severed head was displayed on a pole outside Westminster Hall until 1685. The head then changed hands several times before eventually being buried in the grounds of Sidney Sussex College in Cambridge.

After Richard Cromwell resigned in May 1659, General Monck took power for less than a year, before Parliament restored Charles II as king. On 29th May 1660, Charles rode through the city of London in triumph, returning to the city he had fled from as a boy nearly 18 years before. One of Charles's first priorities was to try and recover the remains of his father's art collection and he immediately tasked Clement Kinnersley to make an inventory of what had remained in the palaces for Cromwell's use.

Charles started making acquisitions, but not as obsessively as his father. Just before his restitution he acquired 72 paintings from the dealer William Frizell for £2,086, but he delayed receiving them, advising Frizell, 'Frizell keep these pictures till I send for them at Breda.'[22]

Kinnersley's inventory of May 1659 totalled £40,758 worth of goods, and whilst down on the £53,000 that had been reserved for the Commonwealth, listed a substantial haul of around 230 tapestries and 31 pictures, not including Mantegna's *Triumphs*.

At Charles's instigation, the Attorney General, Sir Geoffrey Palmer instructed all those in possession of goods formerly belonging to the crown, 'that they should forthwith bring them all in, or make discovery thereof under the penalty of his majesties high displeasure.'[23] This was formalised in an act of 14th August 1660, which spelled out severe penalties and also offered a reward to informers of 20% of the value of goods recovered. The 20% commission unleashed Colonel William Hawley, who started a campaign devoted to the recovery of the king's goods through a small army of enforcers, informers and accomplices and made himself a fortune. Most of Charles I's possessions and all his paintings helpfully had the Royal Cipher branded on their back. Many holders of royal goods such as Emmanuel de Critz or the Duke of Northumberland simply handed them in.

Hawley completed an inventory of his recoveries for Charles in August 1661 entitled, *A Booke containing severall of his Maties goods brought into his maties closset and wardrop by Col. Wm. Hawley, by order of a Committe of lords, in April 1660*. Hawley returned over 600 paintings and 203 statues.

He avoided listing names of previous owners to avoid charges that he had taken anything that had not previously belonged to the king. Included were masterpieces by Holbein, Tintoretto, Raphael, Correggio and Titian, but these must have been copies and later inventories show that nothing by these artists was ever recovered. Hawley did, however, find 14 Van Dycks of which five remain in the Royal Collection today.

By the middle of 1662 Charles was financially and politically secure, having sold the port of Dunkirk to Louis XIV for £290,000 and married Catherine of Braganza. He paid off his debt to William Frizell and took possession of another 72 pictures for the Royal Collection. Hawley's position as chief recoverer continued with his formal appointment in 1662 to a Royal Commission dedicated to the recovery of Charles I's possessions.

Charles pursued his father's former possessions irrespective of whether they had been given to creditors of Charles I in genuine payment of a debt or sold. All were recovered regardless of the claimant's title to the piece. A 1666 inventory lists 1,100 paintings which, when compared to van de Critz's 1639 inventory of Charles I's suggests that around 300 paintings were lost in the sale. Although Charles II achieved return of the bulk of the collection, including works by Giulio Romano and Van Dyck, the rarest masterpieces by artists such as Titian, Raphael and Correggio, had left for the great European collections where they can still be found today.

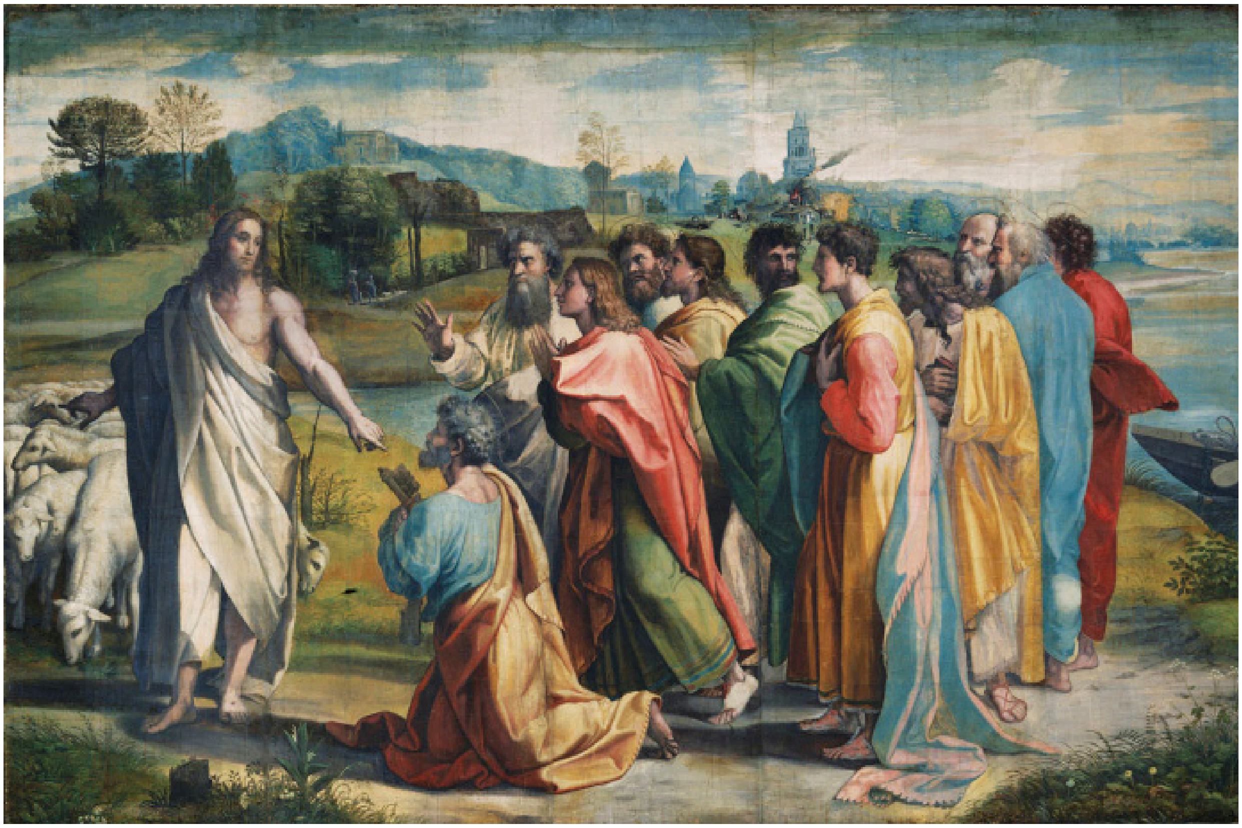
Although perhaps not a cultural catastrophe, this episode remains the major looting episode of Britain's history. Charles I was stubborn and foolish and could easily have adopted a less intransigent attitude towards religion and taxation. His dogmatic and unshakable belief that his authority derived from God alone put him on a path to destruction from which he could have compromised. His taste in art was exceptional and he combined the ruthlessness and connoisseurship of a great collector.

Cromwell was fanatical in his puritanical beliefs, but an excellent general. He had the soldier's touch and commanded the respect of the common people until his death. However, his dissolving of Parliament when it suited him and his love of his royal surroundings when Lord Protector echoed some of the failings of the king he had deposed. Charles II's pursuit of his late father's art collection and endorsement of the brutal tactics of Colonel Hawley mimicked the lengths to which his father had gone to secure the art. Charles collected more modestly, avoiding the need for punitive taxes to finance his acquisitions and thus stimulated economic growth that continued up until his death in 1685.

Politically, the Commonwealth tried to use the sale to destroy the mystique of royalty and reduce the royal trappings down to everyday goods that could be traded like regular household goods. Cromwell reserved a large part of the sale as soon as he could and paradoxically founded the basis of the future Royal Collection.

Financially, one of the original beneficiaries was to have been the navy to counter the threat of invasion from Royalist sympathisers from either France or Ireland. The navy did receive £26,500 from the sale as originally budgeted but, since its debt at the time the regime collapsed in 1660 was £694,112, the £26,500 cannot have made much difference. Horse trading and double dealing went on, including undervaluing of assets to facilitate their sale to specific individuals, so it is hardly surprising that the accounts of the sale are opaque.

The Treasurer's Accompte of their disbursements of the Money raysed by the Sale of the late King Queene and princes goods & personal Estate, which was drawn up around 1658, lists over 1100 sales between 1650 and 1658 which raised a total of £134,383. As well as the £26,500 given to the navy, £10,000 was allocated towards the salaries claimed by treasurers, contractors and trustees. The king's creditors received between £96,000 and £118,000, as goods handed over in lieu of debts. Goods worth £53,700 were reserved for Cromwell's use, including the Raphael Cartoons, Mantegna's Triumphs and the best tapestry cycles. In total, around 1300 paintings were sold. The major loser was the royal picture collection and the major beneficiaries were the art collections of the European monarchs and the early buyers at the sale such as Colonel Hutchinson.



Christ's Charge to Peter **by Raphael Sanzio (1483-1520). One of a series of cartoons for tapestries commissioned by Pope Leo X in 1515-16.**

A direct result of the sale was the formation of the London art market and an art boom ensued with 35,000 oil paintings being traded between 1669 and 1692. Auctions and sales became regular events in Covent Garden, and a mass of dealers, aristocrats and tradesmen became involved in the art world. In the time of Charles I the great collectors such as Arundel or Buckingham had required enormous capital and the political protection of the king in order to collect, but by the middle of Charles II's reign everything was available to anyone at a price. Large collections were amassed by commoners and when the collection of the court painter, Sir Peter Lely, was sold in 1680, his 500 paintings raised over £26,000.

Ironically, paintings that were looted and sold off by the rule of the lynch mob, and are now to be found in the great museums of Europe, are often more accessible than those that have remained in the Royal Collection. The Titians and Correggios in the Prado Museum in Madrid or the Louvre in Paris can be viewed at any time, whereas the paintings in the Royal Collection are not normally available for public viewing unless in an exhibition in one of the specified gallery spaces. But the Royal Collection has been making considerable progress in recent years to improve access, and Windsor Castle, Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace, Buckingham Palace, Holyroodhouse and Sandringham are all open part of the time when many of the best paintings can be seen in the public areas.

The official position is that ‘the Royal Collection is held in trust by the Queen as sovereign for her successors and the nation, and is not owned by her as a private individual.’ The Queen’s Gallery at Buckingham Palace was first opened in 1962 and in 2000 was reopened after major reconstruction and enlargement, and the Queen’s Gallery at Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh has been designed to take exhibitions from Buckingham Palace in their entirety. But although an excellent series of exhibitions are mounted, the space available cannot do justice to the vastness of the collection which consists in round terms of 7,000 paintings, 3,000 miniatures, 40,000 drawings and watercolours, 150,000 prints and 1,400 sculptures.

Several years ago, the Royal Collection embarked on a major exercise to compile a database with online facilities for accessing records of all aspects of the collection. Eventually much of this information will be made available to scholars, researchers and the general public. Meanwhile the Royal Collection continues to publish scholarly catalogues as time and resources permit.

Run as a charity with no public subsidy, without an online inventory it is hard for members of the public to know where to find paintings in the collection and whether these can be seen apart from those pictures on view in various state rooms which are open to the public for a fee on a limited basis. This means that many of the paintings are, in practical terms, inaccessible in private apartments or in storage.

If the Royal Collection really does belong to the nation, some would say that there is a case for it to be either given or lent to the National Gallery which has an excellent conservation department and administration and could make the paintings available to the British public free of charge. But the National Gallery had to be created by purchase and donation from scratch because, unlike virtually all other national collections, it did not begin with a core royal collection.

Brian Sewell, art critic of London’s Evening Standard, said that the Royal Raphaels and Mantegnas are the most important works of the Renaissance and ‘they should be in the National Gallery, that is where they will have the greatest impact.’[24] Charles Saumarez Smith, Director of the National Gallery at the time, commented, ‘there are some people who think it would be better for the Mantegnas to be here at the National so they'd be seen by millions of people rather than however many go to Hampton Court', before adding diplomatically that 'nationalism is not necessarily desirable.'[25]

The National Gallery by contrast with the Royal Collection has less than 3,000 paintings which is small for a country with a history such as England and a fraction of the size of other European national collections. The ambiguity of who owns the Royal Collection was first debated by Cromwell's Rump Parliament, who rapidly came to the conclusion it belonged to the people before looting it and selling it off. Nearly 400 years later the same ambiguities exist, although even if access is not ideal, the Royal Collection has made steady progress towards improving this while safeguarding its legacy.

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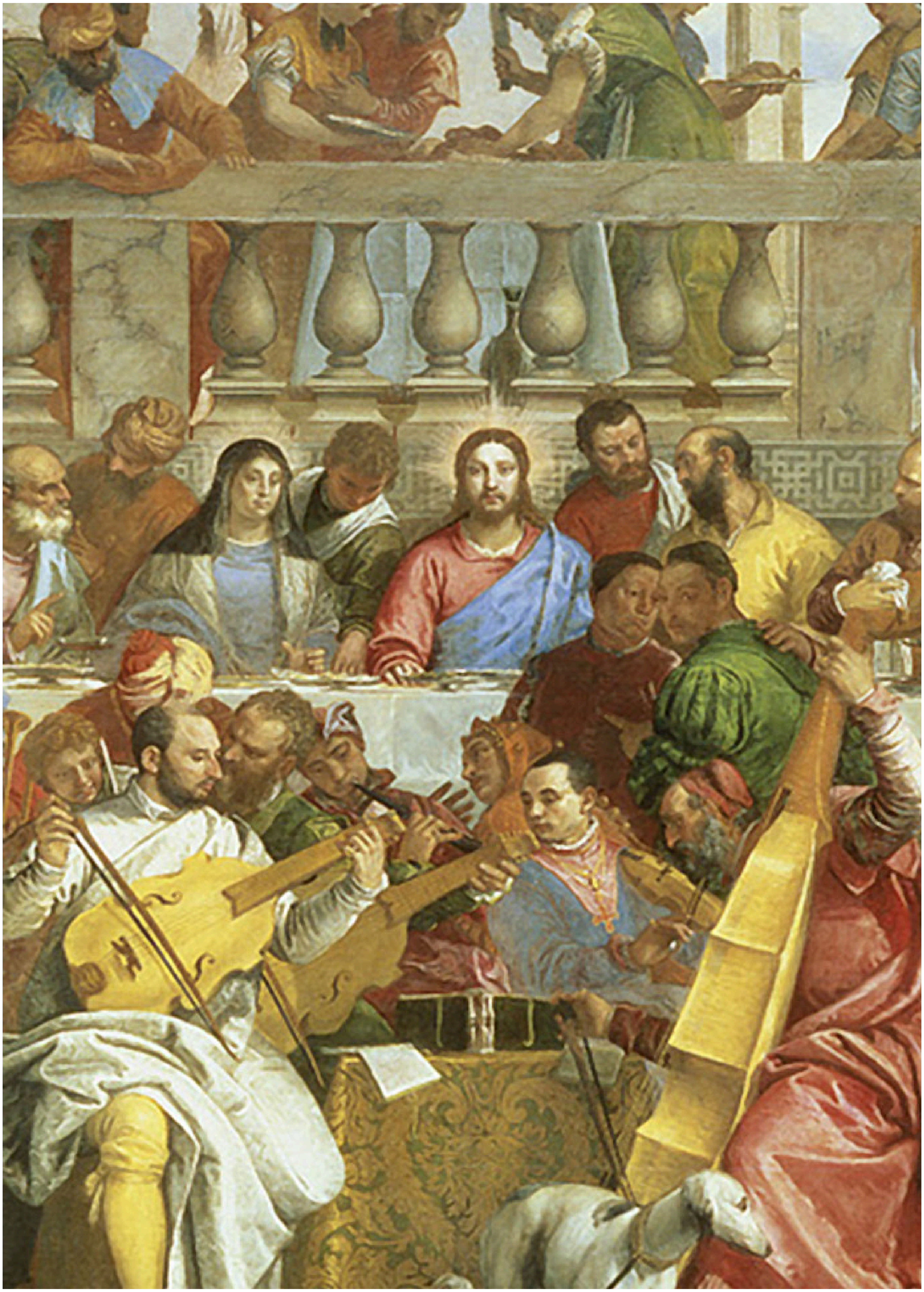
8 - Napoleon



Detail from *The Wedding at Cana* by Veronese

> ‘Clisson was born for war. While a child he knew the lives of the great captains. He thought out the principles of military art when those of his age were at school and running after girls. As soon as he was old enough to carry arms he marked every step by brilliant actions. He had reached for the first rank in the army though but a youth. Fortune constantly favoured his genius. His victories followed one another and his name was known to the people as one of their dearest leaders.’
>
> - The opening lines of Napoleon’s novel *Clisson et Eugénie*, written in 1795.

Napoleon wrote *Clisson et Eugénie* when he was broke, out of favour, shabby, malarial and had just spent ten days in prison in the Chateâu d’Antibes. The fragmentary novel of thirteen pages goes on to say that, whilst brooding because the greatness of his soul escaped general notice, Clisson sometimes, ‘passed whole hours meditating in the depths of the woods…deep in reverie, by the light of the silver star of love.’

Napoleon was 26 and in love with Désirée Clary who later married his marshal, Bernadotte, and became Queen of Sweden. As with most of his writing before the age of 30, Clisson was an early self-portrait and the angst and frustration of the young soldier are apparent. Eugénie was, ‘like the song of a nightingale’ and Clisson, ‘soon imparted to his passion a quality of force and inflexibility which belonged to him.’ The story continues as Clisson, heading a victorious army, despatches a good-looking young officer to help Eugénie. Unfortunately, in a premonition of the troubles Napoleon was later to receive from Josephine, the young officer provided Eugénie with rather more comfort than Clisson had anticipated.

Clisson writes a dramatic last letter, ‘Adieu…kiss my sons - may they not have the ardent soul of their father! They would be, like him, the victims of men, glory and love!’ Then Clisson flings himself into the melée and expires, pierced with a thousand blows.

Clary was Napoleon’s girlfriend until he met Josephine de Beauharnais in 1796, when she was forgotten overnight. Napoleon treasured his novella, and carried it with him for 20 years, even taking it into exile on Saint Helena. What impact it made on Clary is not known.

Napoleon wrote similar tosh to Josephine, but nothing quite as melodramatic as *Clisson et Eugénie*. His efforts, along with Mussolini’s romance novel, *The Cardinal’s Mistress* (tedious bombastic nonsense), and

Hitler’s watercolours (not bad), should make future generations wary of frustrated artists and writers who obtain military power. Even Stalin directed folk ensembles and laid down the subject matter and ideology that artists of the Soviet Union had to follow.

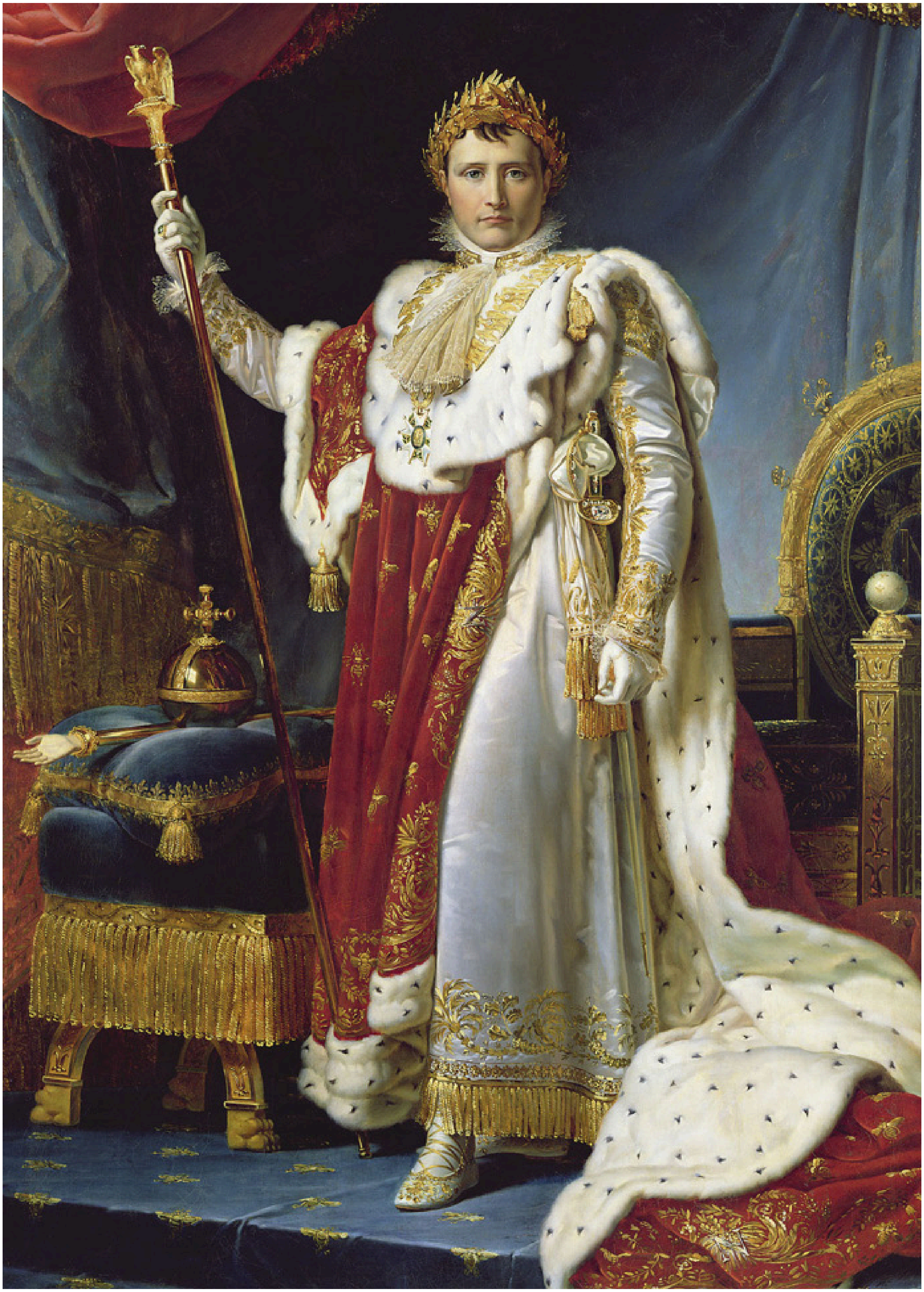
Napoleon was to become the first great warlord of the modern era and possibly the greatest looter of all time. Most study of Napoleon concentrates on his later life when he dominated Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but his later behaviour is best understood by examining his early life. Even at 26, Napoleon described in the novella with complete certainty that he (Clisson) was a genius and that fortune and military victories were ahead. This confidence in his ability, nearly always correct in matters military, was to inspire his soldiers and marshals in the future.

Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821) was born to Charles and Leticia Bonaparte in Ajaccio in Corsica. Charles Bonaparte was a Corsican rebel who unsuccessfully fought the French invaders. After the French won Corsica, he accepted French rule and became a court assistant in the Ajaccio jurisdiction on 900 livres a year. The Bonaparte clan had originally come from Tuscany in the sixteenth century. Napoleon was a self-centred child, whose nickname was Rabulione (the Disturber). ‘I was a little handful’ he recalled later, ‘Except my mother, nothing and no one could impose the slightest restraint on me.’[1] He was skinny, pale, unkempt and prone to temper tantrums. Leticia spanked him, but she was proud of this bright and curious boy.

Napoleon spoke the Corsican dialect of Italian, had no French and obtained a simple education in church history, basic reading and writing. He took to hanging around the docks and garrisons. The soldiers made him a uniform and cut him a toy sword. Although he led a street gang, and fought bloody schoolboy battles, he loved solitude and enjoyed riding in the Corsican hills and through the groves of olives, chestnuts, lemons and oranges.

Corsican traits were to remain with him all his life: - open family quarrels, bellicose brawls, an inner toughness towards constant poverty and adversity, intense family loyalty, a vivid imagination, a quickness to avenge a slight (the Corsican vendetta) and an independence as wild as Corsica itself, which was constantly pounded by the sea and wind. People remember his incessant curiosity and never-ending questions, his impatience and long brooding silences. He was an independent and determined little boy.

All Napoleon’s father could afford to do was petition the French king to educate the boy and his brothers at the Crown’s expense. This required Charles to prove some distant aristocratic lineage, which, to his credit and despite complications, he managed to do.



***Napoleon I in his coronation robe* (*c.* 1804) by Francois Pascal Simon Gérard.**

On 15th December 1778, Charles, with the nine-year-old Napoleon and his brother Joseph, sailed to France from Corsica. Napoleon was enrolled at the secular school at Autun, where the monks taught a curriculum based round the humanities. Abbé Cardon recalled later that Napoleon was a, 'grave and pensive character'[2] who learned easily and fast. Napoleon was taught French, but he maintained a Corsican accent all his life. In March, Napoleon entered the royal military college of Brienne in the northern province of Champagne.

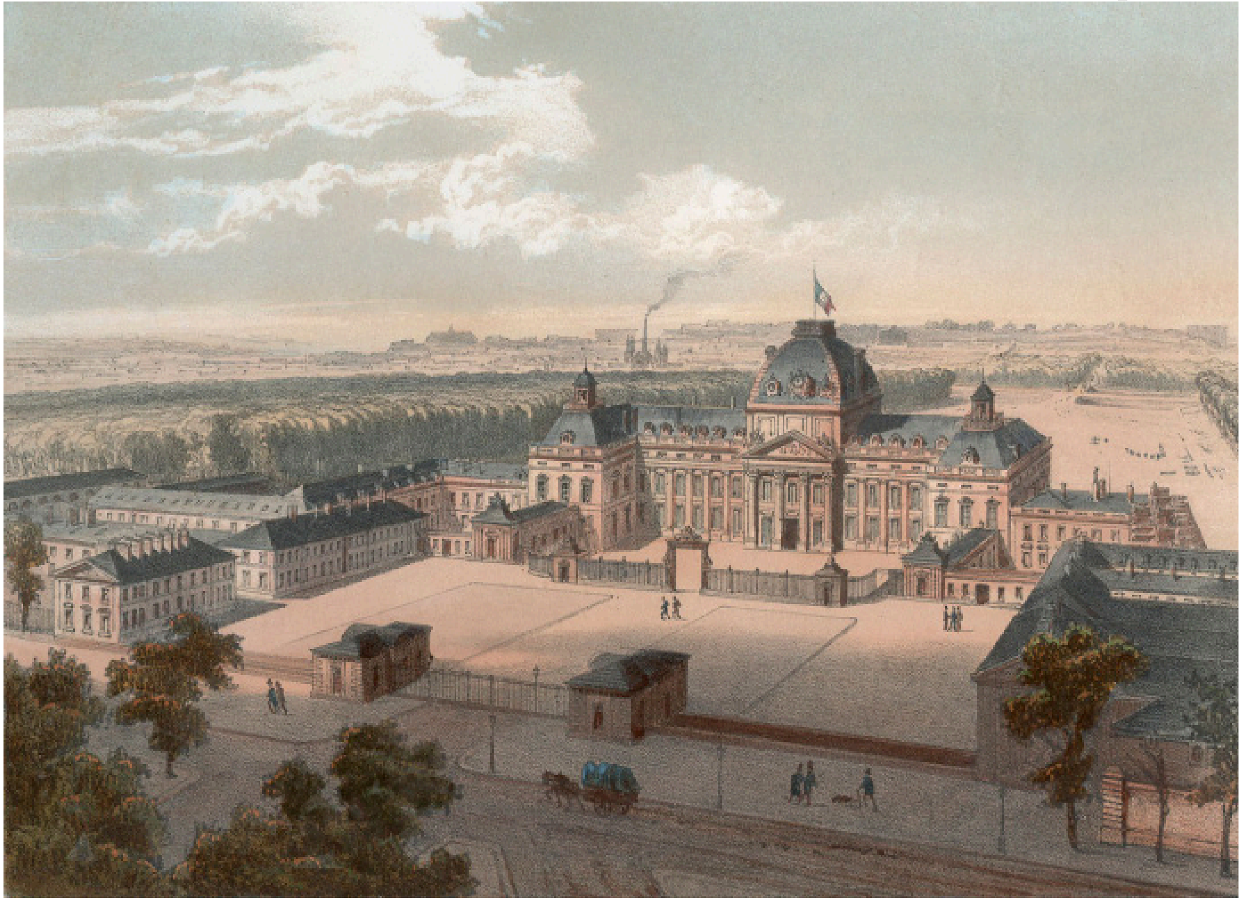
Brienne was a preparatory school for both rich and poor young aristocrats intent on later entering the famed Ecole Militaire in Paris. Napoleon was one of 60 court-appointed scholars. Teaching was by Minimes monks of the Order of St Benoit and, although the standard was poor, it included: Latin classics, ancient literature, geography, ancient and modern history, mathematics, dancing, musical instruments and religion.

Napoleon embraced the Spartan existence similar to what he had experienced in Corsica. He had a tiny room, a strap bed with straw mattress, and a single blanket even in the freezing winter. His father's business ventures remained unsuccessful and Napoleon remained poor and resentful. Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, a fellow student, later wrote that Napoleon's, 'ardent wish to acquire knowledge was evident from the commencement of his studies... his conversation (with teachers and comrades) almost always bore the appearance of ill humour, and he was certainly not very amiable. This I attribute to the misfortunes made on him by the conquest of his country.'[3]

Napoleon was bullied, taunted for his accent, his poverty and his ancestry. He fought back, but it left scars and a dislike for the French aristocratic classes that meant he would later show them little mercy or support after the revolution. He would have been fair game for older and stronger boys and, as with all male-only schools, there were undercurrents of homosexuality. Napoleon hinted at it later, saying that, 'Brought up amongst the monks he had experienced the vices and the dissoluteness of the monasteries.'[4]

Although Napoleon dreamt of Corsican independence and escaping from the school, he worked hard and settled in more over the next two years. Weak in Latin and refusing to learn German, he excelled in maths, algebra, geometry, history and particularly enjoyed Plutarch's *Lives of Great Men*.

His teacher, Monsieur de Keralio, recommended him to the Ecole Militaire in Paris, as, 'slightly above four foot ten inches in height, well built, and in excellent health, obedient, polite and respectful; very correct conduct and has always distinguished himself in mathematics; his knowledge of history and geography is passable; he is rather weak in social conversation and in Latin.' He concluded, 'He will make an excellent naval officer' if accepted.[5]



The École Militaire, Paris.

Napoleon graduated into the Ecole Militaire close to Hotel des Invalides in October 1784 as an artillery cadet with his examiner noting he was of, 'commanding character, imperious and opinionated.' He had concentrated solely on history, geography and mathematics, whence came his 'predominant ideas.'[6] Napoleon later objected to the difference between rich and poor students and to their numbers of servants. He thought lavish meals and fancy rooms were poor preparation for the vagaries of weather and frugal life experienced by a soldier on campaign.

He graduated in August 1785, a poor 42nd out of 58:

> Reserved and studious, he prefers study to any type of amusement, finding pleasure in the reading of good authors; very applied (to the study of) abstract sciences, little curious as to the others, (having) a thorough knowledge of mathematics and geography; quiet, loving solitude, capricious, arrogant, extremely inclined to egoism, speaking little, spirited in his answers, quick and harsh in his replies, having much pride and boundless ambition, this young man deserves to be encouraged.[7]

Napoleon arrived as a subaltern with bombardiers garrisoned at Valence. In January 1796 he was made a lieutenant with garrison and field duties. The French army was in decline, but the artillery regiment was next to an artillery training school. Napoleon spent his time becoming acquainted with the artillery, with 3 days in the classroom followed by 3 days in the field. He was fascinated by: map reading and making, the manufacture and storage of powder, the differences between cannon, howitzers and mortars, foundries, forges, sieges and fortifications, and learnt the skills that were to make him the finest artillery officer of his generation. On leave in Corsica he worked on a history of the island.

His regiment moved to Auxonne in Burgundy. Napoleon spent his free time reading, and started to write theories on tactics, powder, velocity, the advantages of rifled cannon and the speed and rotation of cannon balls. Later, when exiled on St Helena he wrote, 'Tactics, evolutions, the science of the engineer and the artillerist can all be learned from books, almost like geometry, but the knowledge of the heroic facts of war can only be acquired by study of the history of wars, the battles of great captains, and by experience.'[8]

In 1798 events in France moved rapidly towards revolution as hatred of ecclesiastical and feudal privileges tore down the existing aristocratic and royal infrastructure. Napoleon saw the dangers of an army that was merely a mob without discipline and operating without legal authority. It offered little future for him and so he took 6 months' leave and sailed for Corsica. There he became caught up in a three-way struggle among revolutionaries, Corsican nationalists and royalists.

He exceeded his leave of absence, and led a riot against the French army in Corsica, but was somehow promoted to captain. He published Le Souper de Beaucaire, which gained him the recognition and support of Augustin Robespierre, the brother of the leading revolutionary, Maximilian

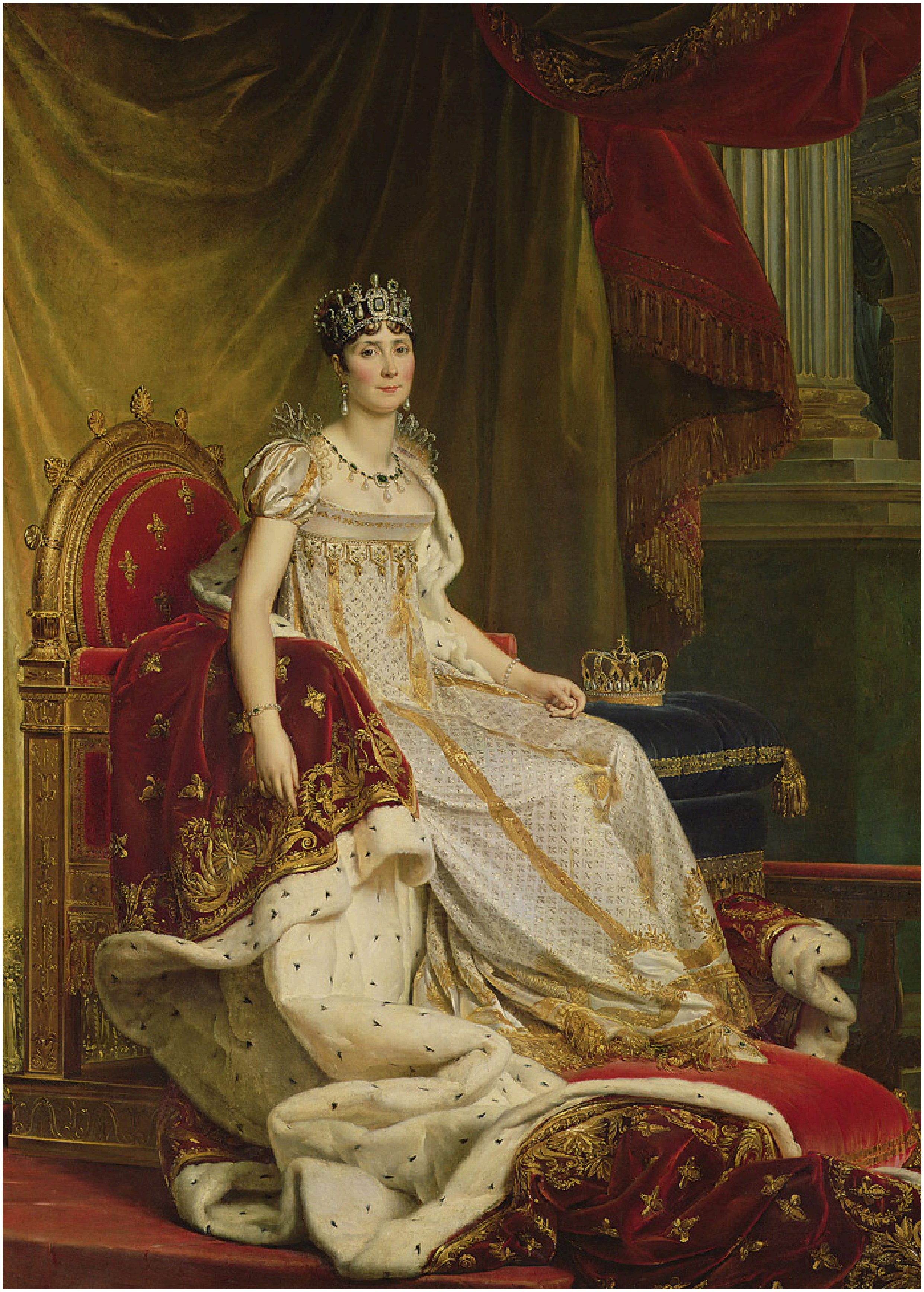
Robespierre. With Robespierre's support, and that of his fellow Corsican Antoine Christophe Saliceti, Napoleon found himself in charge of the artillery at the siege of Toulon, a city in revolt against the Republic and occupied by British troops. Napoleon was able to practise his artillery skills and, despite being wounded in the thigh, took the city and was promoted to brigadier general.

At this time he became engaged to Désirée Clary, to whom Clisson et Eugénie was dedicated, but suffered a major setback with the fall of the Robespierres in the Thermidorian Reaction, an effort to defeat a royalist uprising in Paris. He was imprisoned briefly in the Chateau d'Antibes. However, he was appointed by Paul Barras to defend the Tuileries palace and, together with another young cavalry officer named Joachim Murray, seized some artillery pieces and used them to repel the invaders.

Parisian society enjoyed this victory and Napoleon's exploits became the talk of elegant salons: 'where did he come from, what has he done, what extraordinary services has he performed to merit our attention?'[9]. Overnight he went from an impoverished young brigadier general to a highly paid army commander in a large house with a staff. Within the month he had been made commander of the army of the interior.

Napoleon was invited to all the soirées and garden parties and he became a fixture on the Paris circuit. The eyes of one of the city's most alluring seductresses alighted on him. Josephine de Beauharnais was an elegant and beautiful Creole of French parentage from Martinique in the West Indies. At 32, she had been the mistress of many of the city's most powerful men. She lived in a small house in the rue Chanteriene with her two children. She had a fine musical voice with a West Indian accent, long chestnut hair, sparkling eyes and a small turned-up nose. Flirtatious with a supple figure and long legs, 'it was said of her that she even went to bed gracefully.'[10]

She was also a spendthrift, unfaithful, and flighty. Compared to the provincial women Napoleon had encountered to date she was a creature exotic enough to have sprung from another planet. Napoleon's memory of Désirée Clary disappeared overnight in an intoxicating mixture of love, lust and Parisian intrigue. Napoleon became a daily visitor to her house in the rue Chanteriene along with countless other admirers and lovers. Everybody in Napoleon's family was utterly against this romance and terrified of a marriage. Josephine claimed to be 4 years younger than she actually was and saw Napoleon as a potential permanent sinecure that could stabilise her precarious existence reliant on her charm, good looks and body. Her chief lover at that time, Paul Barras, was exhausted by her expensive tastes, wanted to get rid of her and a deal was struck. She would marry Napoleon if Barras appointed him commander of the army of Italy.



***Empress Josephine* (1763-1814) 1808, by Francois Pascal Simon Gérard (1770-1837)**

Napoleon, although brilliant as a general and tactician, was a novice in the salons of Paris and seems to have had little idea of the intrigue around him. Perhaps if his mother Leticia had been to hand she would have seen through Josephine's seductive smile and false pretensions, So although Napoleon received his appointment, there were to be countless disappointments, worries and betrayals whilst he was on campaign. They were married at a Paris registry office in March 1796, he upping his age to 28 and she dropping hers to 29.

On the wedding night, whilst trying to assert his conjugal rights, Napoleon tried to remove Josephine's dog *Fortune* from the bed and was bitten in the leg, an event he later saw as a bad omen. He left two days later to take over his command with Josephine promising insincerely to follow shortly.

Napoleon arrived in Nice to take command in late March 1796 having written passionate love letters to Josephine en route. Napoleon was as accomplished militarily as he was naive in love. He set about revitalising his army, appointing and firing officers, initiating reforms and providing decent food. He began planning his invasion against the Austrian army in Lombardy and Milan. British naval ships controlled the coastal waters in support of the Austrians. The European powers, appalled at the republican upstarts, were united in their opposition to the revolution.

The Directory were themselves short of funds and kept Napoleon short, leading him to develop the practice of extracting funds from local populations wherever he went during the rest of his career. From the beginning, even in his native France, Napoleon forced local banks to grant loans so he could pay his soldiers. But he also needed to motivate his soldiers and he restored the ancient Roman practice of promising his men they could live off the land and keep some of the loot they would encounter: 'Soldiers, you are ill clothed, poorly fed; the government owes you much, it has given you nothing ... I will lead you to the richest plains in the world. Rich provinces and great cities will be in your power; you will find there honour, glory and riches.'[11] Although it wasn't original, it struck just the right chord, as Napoleon did so often with his soldiers on the verge of a campaign. The soldiers also felt they were fighting for revolutionary ideals that promised mankind a freer and better life.

Napoleon sent out spies and rounded up horses, mules, muskets and cannon before advancing into Italy. His fast-moving army recorded several victories, an amazing feat considering he had never commanded a division on the move let alone an army. He encouraged his troops to live off the land, but drew a distinction between pillage and the spoils of war. Any soldier capturing a work horse would be paid one Louis, whereas captured cavalry horses could be sold to civilians or army officers. Spoils of war also included a contribution levied on any person, village or town that they overran. The Directory had promised him over a million livres for the army but they only delivered 300,000. Napoleon seized some statuary, the first recorded instance of his looting artworks and put it up for auction commenting, ‘this should give us thirty to forty thousand livres.’[12]

Napoleon gave instructions to General Joubert, ‘rest your troops and take everything that you find in neighbouring villages.’[13] After the battle of Mondovi he ordered the inhabitants to produce all the biscuit, meat, wine and properties, arms and ammunition that belonged to the king of Sardinia. Napoleon informed the Directory, ‘the province of Mondovi alone will give us a million francs in contributions,’[14] and he had the Duke of Parma lined up for millions more. In Pavia and Milan Napoleon was greeted by a people keen to shrug off 100 years of Austrian rule. Napoleon kept the Directory in Paris excited with his confident assurance he was going to be able to extract millions in cash out of the new territories and mentioned sending back fabulous artworks.

Napoleon now pretended he wanted to turn the new French Republic into the centre of European culture and learning. He wanted glory and status and realised that great art, whether stolen, looted or acquired would add sheen to his reputation. These ideas gained momentum in his imagination and, as well as bleeding the Italian cities dry, he decided to remove their finest paintings, books and sculpture.

Napoleon instructed Faipoult, the French minister in Genoa, ‘Send me a geographical, historical, political and topographical report on the imperial fiefs around Genoa so I can make all possible profit from them. Send me a report on the Dukes of Parma, Piacenza and Modena; their armed forces, the location of their fortresses, and what constitutes the riches of their lands; above all send me a report of the paintings and sculptures... that are to be found at Milan, Parma, Modena and Bologna.’

He informed the Directory that he was sending a force to collect six million livres from the Duke of Modena and starting to intimidate Rome and the Grand Duke of Tuscany with a view to extracting cash and forcing them to hand over their finest artworks. The Duke of Parma, in return for neutrality, gave Napoleon two million livres and 20 of his finest paintings. Napoleon, considering possible claims of restitution should the balance of power shift away from the French, was careful to draw up treaties with both dukes so the artworks were obtained with a quasi-legal status. The Duke of Modena also agreed to pay 7.5 million livres and to allow Napoleon 20 paintings of his choice.

Napoleon asked the Directory to send him some artists from Paris to help him make the choice. The Directory became increasingly excited by the prospect of these treasures coming to France and established a Commission of Science and Arts in Italy headed up by the mathematician Gaspard Monge and the chemist Claude-Louis Berthollet, supported by a naturalist, a sculptor and an artist, who were despatched to Milan to supervise the artistic plundering. Money and treasure began to pour in. Eight million livres were put at the Directory's disposal in Genoa, and Napoleon started making disposals to the army on the Rhine and various generals, as wished by the Directory.

Napoleon's divisional commanders continued to live off the land and for a while their affairs became comparatively comfortable. Stendhal dryly observed later how quickly the men became smartly dressed and addicted to the good life, beautiful women and delicious wine and foods. When the Lombardians objected to the pillaging, Napoleon observed that 20 million livres was a small price to pay for liberty from Austrian rule.

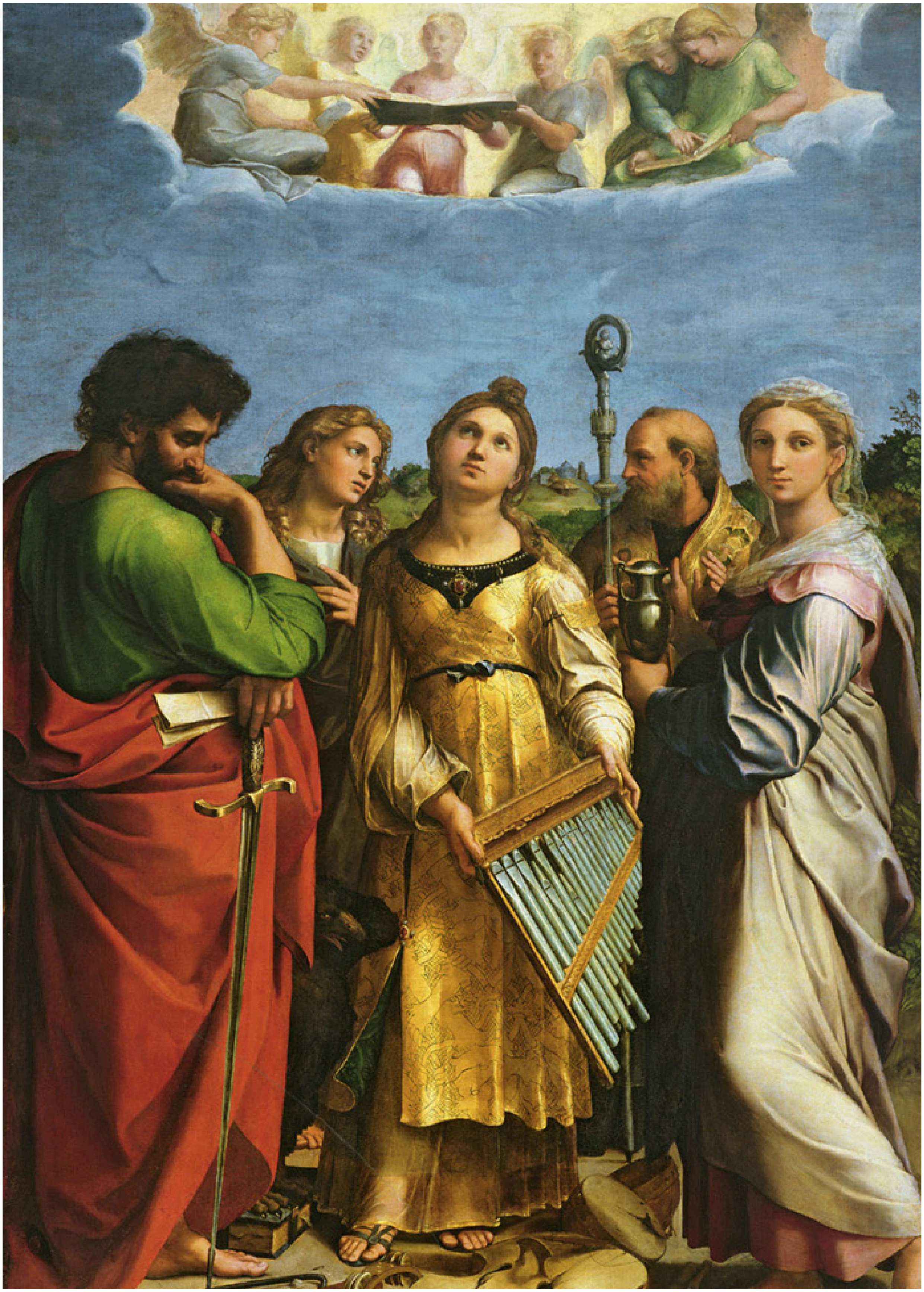
Shipping the treasures from Italy became a major logistical issue. When Monge and Berthollet arrived in Milan, they could scarcely believe what awaited them to be shipped to France. An inventory of treasure removed from the Bibliotheque Ambrosienne in Milan and from various academies, palaces, museums and churches in and around Piacenza and Parma listed 34 items, including an 1,100-year-old Egyptian papyrus, a manuscript by Virgil annotated by Petrarch, and paintings by van Eyck, Correggio, Salvator Rosa, Rubens, Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci.

During this period Napoleon continued to write almost daily to Josephine, at one moment exhilarated with his success, the next reproachful as to why she hadn't yet joined him. Her replies to him were short and intermittent and she was in fact having too much fun in Paris to leave.

Josephine had taken up with a dashing young hussar called Hippolyte Charles. When Napoleon sent Murat in desperation, she fooled him that she was pregnant and couldn’t travel, which drew long letters of sympathy from Napoleon.

After she had promised and failed to come for the countless time, Napoleon wrote:

> Josephine, where shall one send this letter? If it is to Paris, my misery is then certain, you no longer love me! I have only to die... my tears flow... no peace of mind or hope... your conduct... but I ought to accuse you? No. Your conduct is that of your destiny. So lovely, so beautiful, so gentle, should you be the instrument of my despair... Adieu, my Josephine... embrace your lovely children: they write me charming letters... I shall love you all my life.[15]



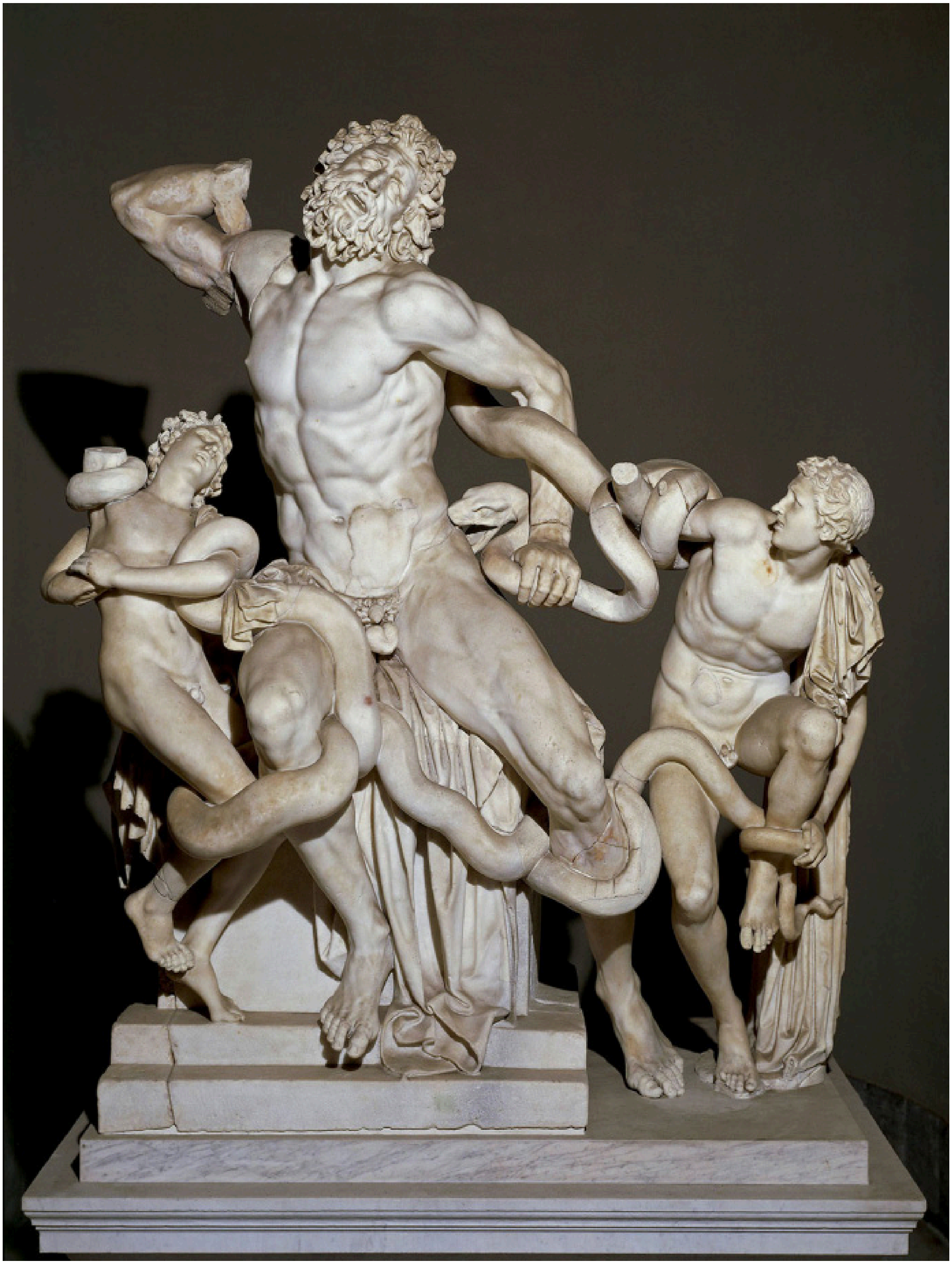
***St. Cecilia surrounded by Saints Paul, John the Evangelist, Augustine and Mary Magdalene* (c.1513) by Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio of Urbino).**

It is sometimes difficult to reconcile these letters with the man who was taking on the armies of Europe single handed and terrifying men so that they often surrendered to him and handed over their finest treasures without firing a shot. But Josephine had the only key to his heart and it was going to take years of more betrayals before he was finally able to get rid of her. One suspects that part of him realised what was really going on, but he was so dazzled that he preferred the fog of denial. While waiting for the arrival of Josephine's carriage one day on the road outside Tortona, he dropped his miniature portrait of her and the glass broke. Marmont later wrote that he turned pale and said, 'My wife is either sick or unfaithful.'[16]

Paintings from Parma returning to Paris included Correggio's *Saint Jerome*, which the Parmese unsuccessfully attempted to buy back for a million livres. Commissioner Berthollet chose 50 works from Bologna including Raphael's *Saint Cecile*. In Pavia French agents culled interesting plants and exhibits for Parisian gardens and museums.

Finally, Pope Pius VI signed the Treaty of Tolentino on 19th February 1797, after 9 months of negotiation with Napoleon. It was signed between the French Directory's ambassador to the Holy See, François Cacault, Napoleon and the four representatives of Pius VI's Curia. The papal city of Avignon was ceded to France, a payment was promised of 15.5 million livres in cash and 5.5 million in goods and all papal ports were closed to France's enemies. The treaty also formalised the removal of artistic treasures from the Vatican. The French commissioners could enter any building whether religious or not to establish what was worth removing. This part of the treaty was extended to the whole of Italy in 1798.

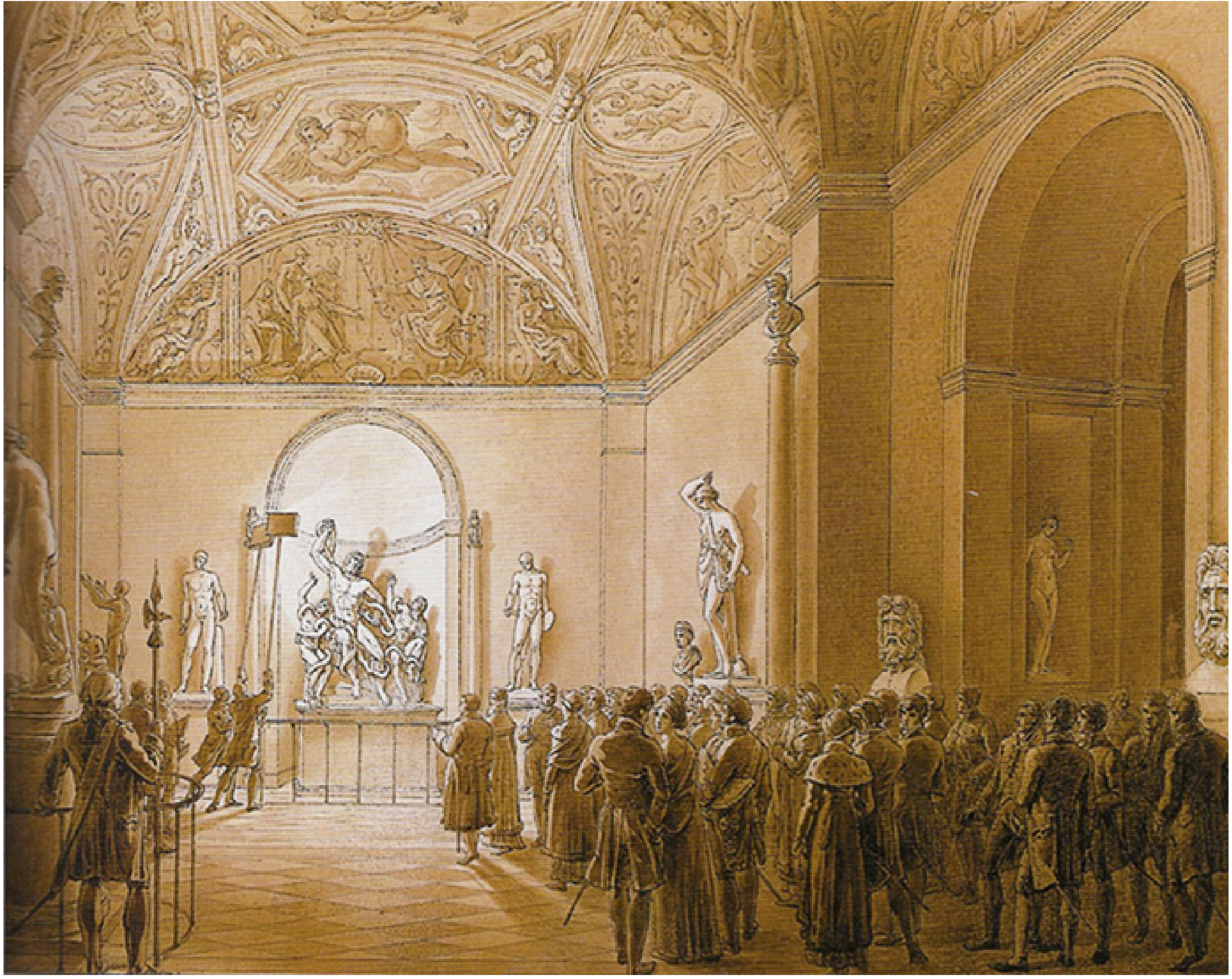
The treaty also allowed the removal of 100 pictures, busts, sculptures or vases and 500 ancient manuscripts. Amongst the pieces of statuary selected were the busts of *Marcus Aurelius* and *Junius Brutus* and the *Laocoön*. Laocoön was a Trojan priest to whom Virgil attributes the line, 'Do not trust the Horse, Trojans, Whatever it is, I fear the Greeks even bearing gifts,' the origin of the saying, 'beware the Greeks bearing gifts.' The Trojans disregarded his advice and Laocoön threw his spear at the horse in disgust. Virgil reports that Minerva, in support of the Greeks, sent sea serpents to strangle Laocoön and his two sons, Antiphantes and Thymbraeus. The death of Laocoön was famously depicted in a much-admired marble sculpture that Pliny the Elder attributes to the Rhodian sculptors Agesander, Athenodoros and Polydorus. This sculpture was rediscovered by a man digging a well in Rome in 1506. The man recognised the sculpture from Pliny’s description even though it had been hidden from human view for over 1400 years.



Laocoon and his children, **Roman copy of Hellenistic marble original (*c.* 2nd century BC).**

The 31-year-old Michelangelo was already Rome's most famous sculptor and he was called in to restore the *Laocoön*. He agreed it was the lost *Laocoön* but refused to restore it, saying it was too beautiful to touch. However, Michelangelo financed his early career by making excellent copies of ancient sculpture and some art historians now suspect he may actually have sculpted the *Laocoön*. What is certain is that the outstanding white marble sculpture of a muscular Laocoön and his sons fighting with the serpents was considered a national treasure and had been housed in the Vatican since its rediscovery.

Even today the Italian police division dedicated to art recovery and protection, the Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale, is the most dedicated in Europe. When Napoleon started to remove the Laocoön, it was too much for the Romans, and they started rioting.



***Musée Napoléon*: Napoleon and courtiers making a visit by night to see the newly-installed *Laocoon*, by Benjamin Zix.**

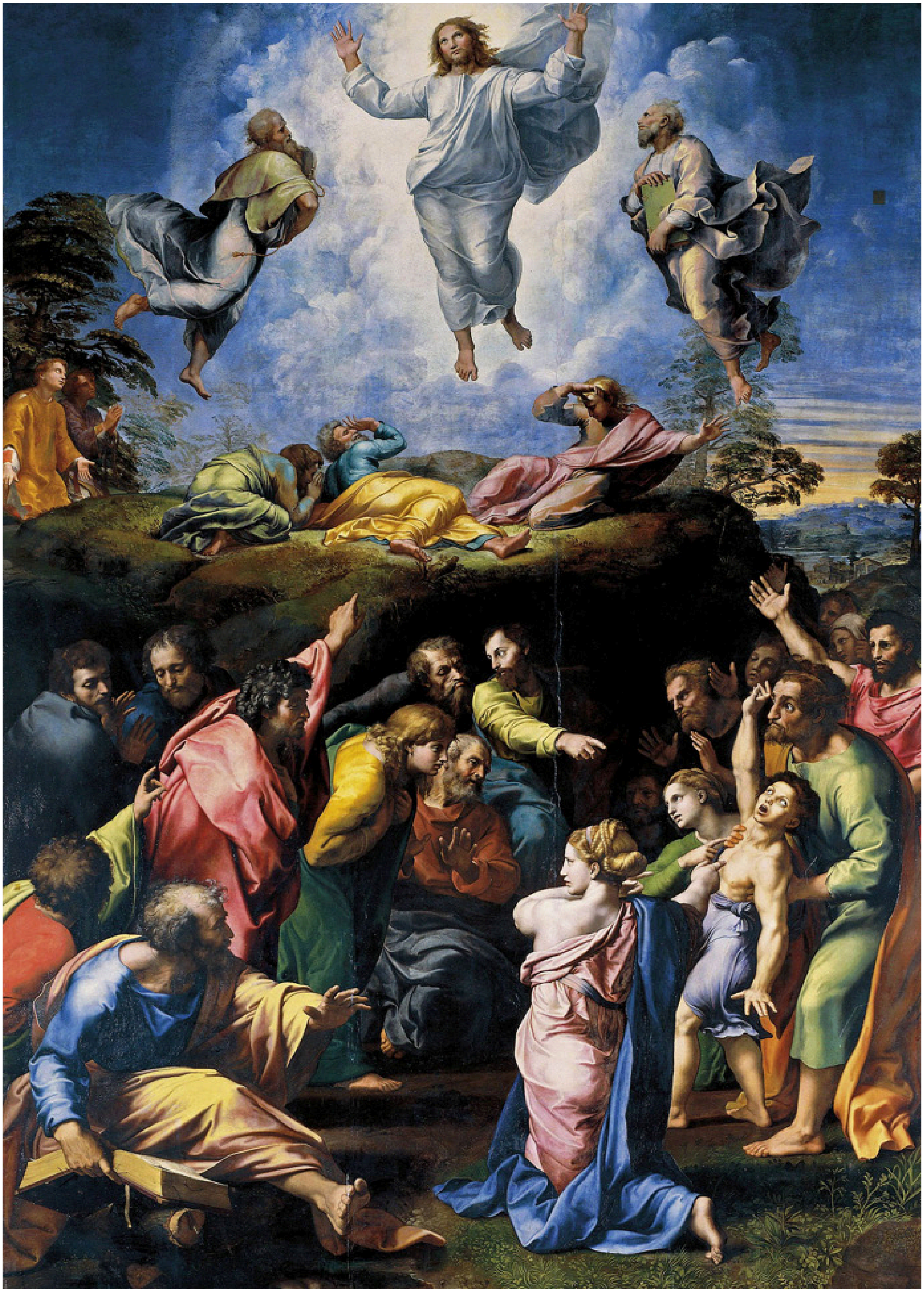
Napoleon quickly and brutally quashed the riots. Unauthorised looting, resistance, treachery, desertion and so on were met with the execution of all those involved. The Laocoön was despatched for Paris along with the other treasures without delay. Napoleon took a particular interest in the Laocoön and it was placed in a special alcove in the Musée Napoleon in Paris, which was later to become the Louvre.

After his return to Paris he made a special night visit to view the Laocoön in situ. There is a drawing of this event in the Louvre with Napoleon standing in front of the sculpture beside curators holding candles raised on sticks for illumination whilst elegant men wearing swords and dress uniform and women in furs stand behind. The issue of looting, particularly of the Laocoön and some of the other more famous Renaissance paintings such as Raphael's Transfiguration, was causing outrage around the courts of Europe.

The Romans ceased rioting. Just off the Piazza Navona stood the remains of a statue, representing Hercules strangling Geryon, which had been dug up near the spot in 1501. It had become the target of graffiti and Romans had given it the nickname 'Pasquino' and what Pasquino said became a source of witty Roman gossip. 'Pasquinades', or anonymous lampoons, were either written on paper and pasted to the base of the sculpture or drawn onto the sculpture itself. By Napoleon's time the statue had developed an identity of his own, and people are still pasting their complaints onto him today.

Anyone wanting to criticise the Pope or the government wrote a pasquinade or satirical poem in the Roman dialect and pasted it onto the statue. Napoleon became a target for such pasquinades, probably the most famous of which goes:

I Francesi son tutti ladri
Non tutti, ma buono parte.
Translating to:-
The French are all thieves
Not all, but most (buono parte).



***The Transfiguration* by Raphael (1483-1520).**

Choosing the major pieces of sculpture and outstanding paintings was relatively simple for the commissioners but the manuscripts were more problematic because they didn't have the knowledge to distinguish great from good. The vast size of the Vatican library would have daunted even a professional librarian and the Italian librarians tried to confuse them. Initially a French scholar suggested they take the library of Queen Christina of Sweden. Although part of this library had been looted by her father Gustavus Adolphus from the Jesuit libraries of Poland, she had also bought part of it on the open market in Paris so its removal would be returning books to Paris.

However, the commissioners finally removed every manuscript written before the year 900. This act eroded the structure of Roman historiography because only some of these volumes found their way back after the restitution ordered by the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

Napoleon continued his successful campaign across Italy and turned his attention to Venice. No longer bothering to wait for formal approval from Paris, and infuriated by a recent Venetian-led uprising against the French that had led to the death of several hundred Frenchmen, he determined to destroy the, 'atrocious and blood thirsty government'[17] of Venice. He referred to the uprising as the 'Sicilian Vespers' after a major rebellion against medieval French rule in Sicily that had been signalled by the ringing of vesper bells on an Easter Monday. Venice had also given asylum to Louis XVIII and allowed the Austrian armies safe passage across their territory. In a burst of anger he said in his native Italian, 'Io saro un Attila per lo Stato Veneto' (I shall be an Attila for the Venetian State).[18]

Venice was the last independent republic of Italy. He initially seized all Venetian merchant ships in Ancona and Trieste, which yielded 50 ships and their valuable cargoes. He surrounded Venice and ranged his heavy artillery round the city on the mainland and blockaded the harbour with his warships.

The Venetians prided themselves on being a nation of accomplished politicians but they were outmanoeuvred by the 26-year-old Corsican. The last Doge, Ludovico Manin, as the wolves circled, immortalised himself with the feeble comment, 'We shall not be safe in our beds tonight.'[19]

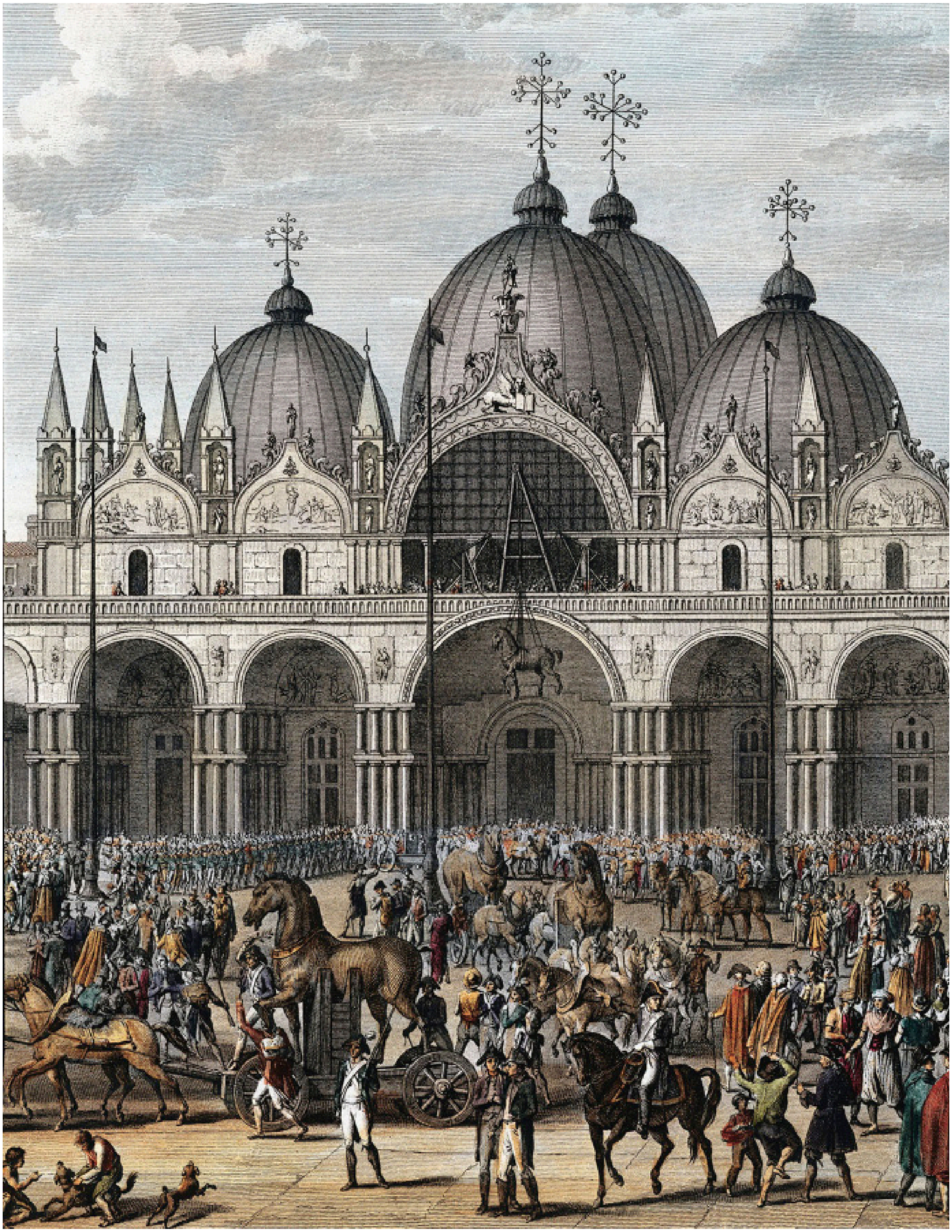
On 12th May 1797, the Great Council of Venice voted itself into extinction and accepted a treaty that transferred governmental power to the people from the hereditary aristocracy. Venice was occupied by foreign soldiers for the first time in 1000 years. The French took the beautiful monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore as their headquarters and began 150 years of destruction in one of Venice’s most beautiful buildings, lasting until Count Vittorio Cini restored the complex in memory of his son in 1951.

In the Treaty of Campo Formio, signed with Austria 5 months later in October 1797, he handed over Venice to the Austrians. Napoleon completed the looting of the city before the Austrians arrived in January 1798.

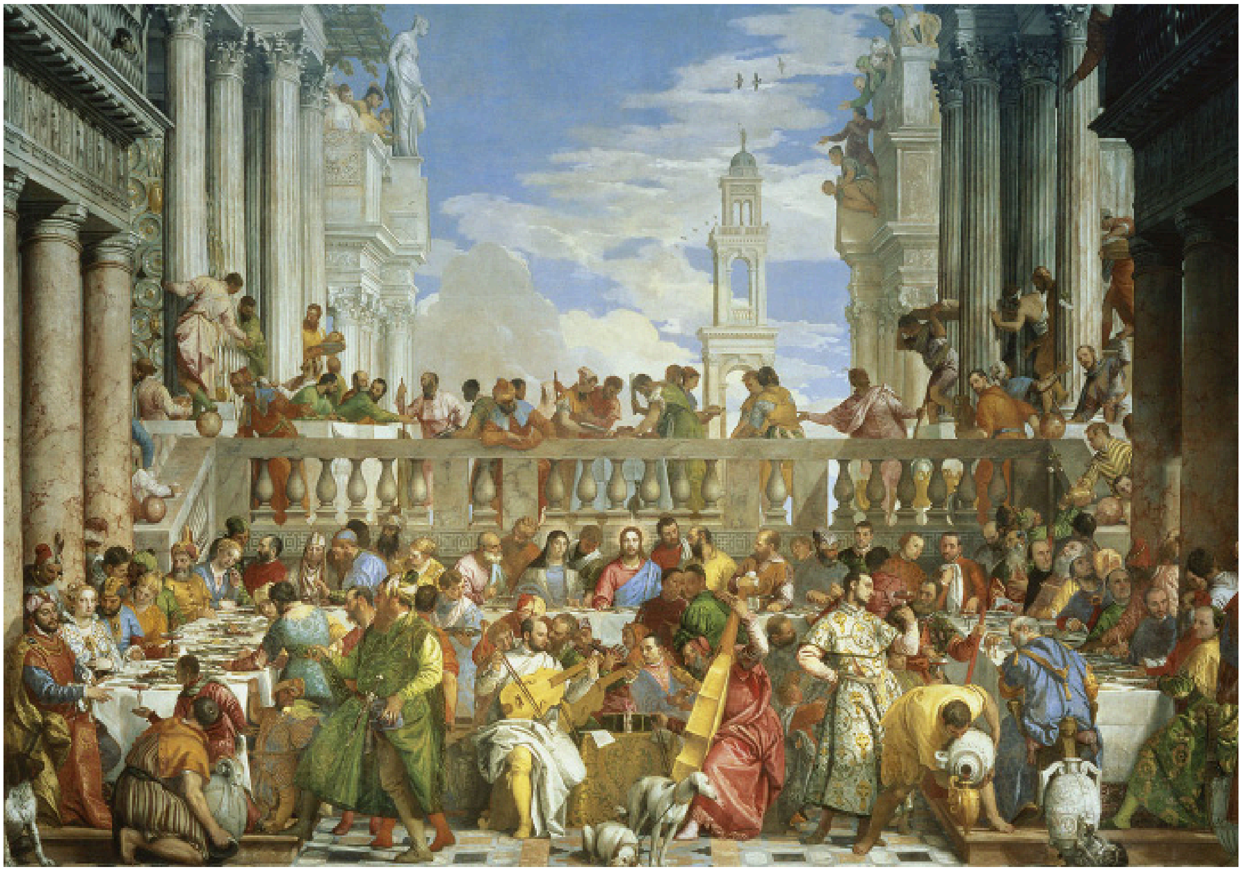
The Treaty of Milan signed with the Venetians on 16th May was actually illegal as it was signed 4 days after the Venetian state had ceased to exist. It specified that the French were to get naval provisions worth 3 million livres, 3 million in cash, 3 warships, 3 frigates and 20 paintings and 500 manuscripts of their choice. As with all his looting, Napoleon took artworks on behalf of the French state.

The looting of the city removed treasures from both public and private sources. Two of the most famous pieces to be taken were the *Marriage at Cana* by Veronese and the four bronze *Horses of St Mark’s*. The weight of the horses and the size of the Veronese presented a logistical challenge but neither was beyond the capability of the Corsican general.

Veronese’s *Marriage at Cana* weighed one-and-a-half tons and measured 666×999 cm. It had been commissioned in 1562 by the Monks of San Giorgio Maggiore, Napoleon’s new headquarters. It depicts the miracle from the New Testament, where Jesus turned water into wine. This painting by Veronese, one of the highlights of the high Renaissance, hung in the monastery until the French arrived.



Removal of the Horses from the Façade of St. Mark's, Venice in 1797. From a contemporary engraving.



The Wedding at Cana (1563) by Paolo Caliari known as Veronese (1528-88).

Veronese had designed the painting to fill one of the enormous walls in the refectory that Palladio had built for the monks of St Giorgio. Napoleon had the painting cut in two and stitched together back in Paris.

During Napoleon's occupation the monastery was degraded into a barracks, and if the painting hadn't been removed it would probably not have survived. The painting also survived the Franco-Prussian war when it was removed to Brest for safekeeping and WWII when it was shunted around France in a truck ahead of the German advance.

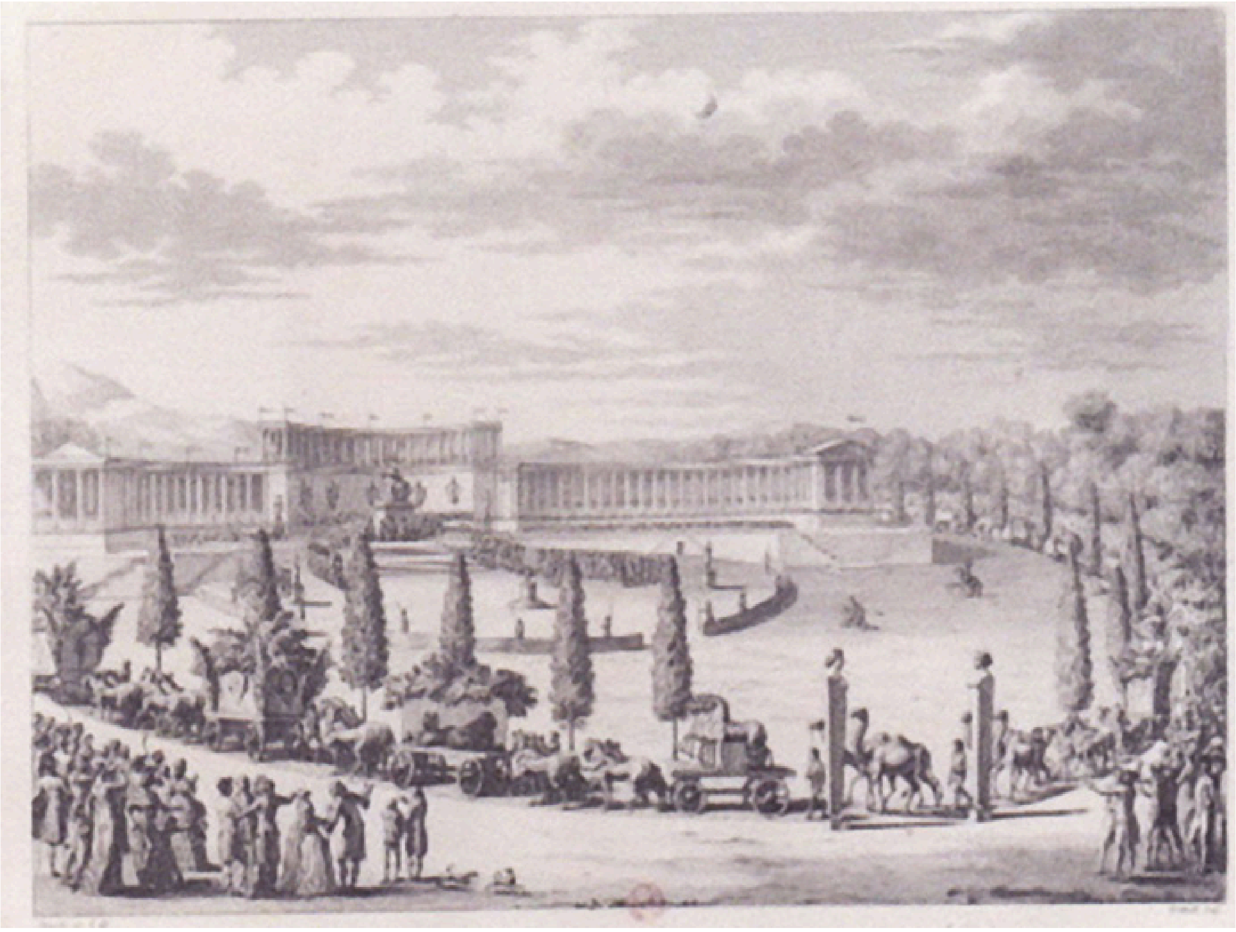
In Paris, Napoleon had it hung in the refurbished great hall of the new Musée Napoleon. When Napoleon was to marry Marie-Louise of Austria in 1810 he chose this hall for the wedding feast. The size of the painting interfered with the wedding arrangements and Napoleon gave the instruction, 'Since it cannot be moved - burn it.'[20] Luckily, the curators ignored this command. When the Congress of Vienna was trying to return looted artworks to Italy, the French curators argued that the painting was too big to move and returned a feeble Charles le Brun painting in return, which is now in the Gallerie dell'Accademia museum in Venice. Marriage at Cana remains today one of most popular paintings in the Louvre.

Later, Napoleon also ordered the four Horses of St Mark's to be melted down for cannon balls, which wasn't done because the foundry believed the horses were constructed of base metal. These two incidents illustrate Napoleon's attitude towards art. He was concerned only with its political leverage and the status it gave him and the new French Republic.

Josephine collected art for their various houses, such as Malmaison, during their marriage, but Napoleon had little interest in the aesthetic aspects of art or appreciation of its life-enhancing qualities.

The history of the Horses of St Mark's provides an overview of two millennia of cultural plunder and they reaappear at several stages through this book. Probably originally Greek, they were stolen by the Romans before being removed or looted to Constantinople, where they stood on the gate above the entrance to Emperor Constantine's Hippodrome. After the sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade, they were stolen by Doge Dandolo for Venice in 1204 and placed above the entrance to St Mark's Basilica. In Venice they became a symbol of the Republic along with the Venetian Lion. When Venice once sued for peace in a dispute with Genoa, a Doge of Genoa remarked, 'Truly you will never have peace if we do not first of all rein in those unbridled horses which are on top of the palace of your evangelist.'[21]

After 600 years the horses were lowered by the French troops in December 1797. The treasures were sent down the coast to Ancona and then on to Leghorn, where a great convoy of loot had been collected from all over Italy. The convoy then travelled up the Rhine and inland to Paris by canal.



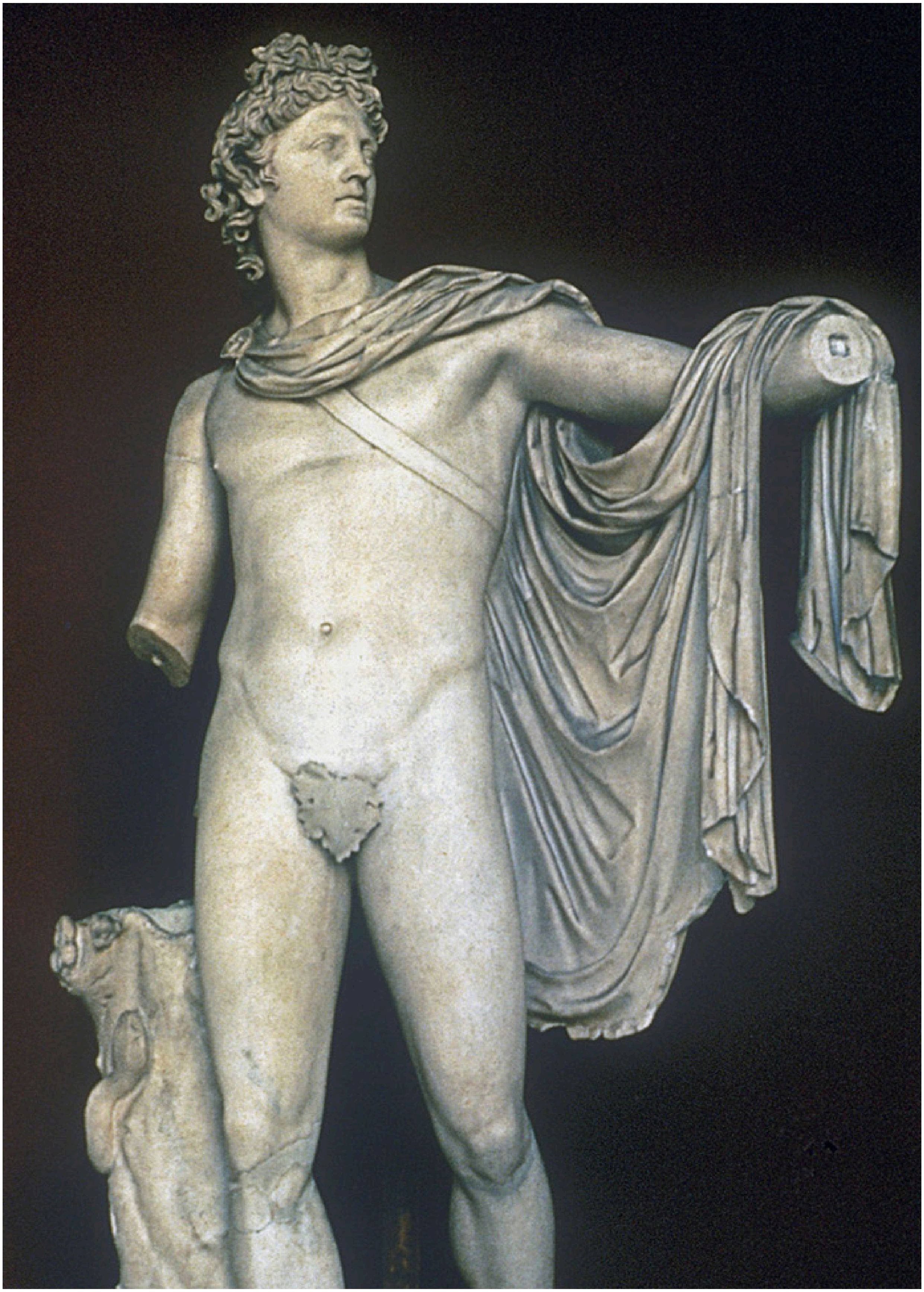
An 1802 engraving of Napoleon’s *Entrée triophale des monuments des sciences et des arts en France* in 1798, by Girardet and P-G Bertault. The Horses of St Mark’s can be seen in the foreground.

Contemporary drawings show the French soldiers holding off the Venetian mob with bayonets. The sculptor Canova remarked to Napoleon, ‘May your majesty at least leave some things in Italy. These ancient monuments form a chain which cannot ever be transported.’[22] After 1815 Canova was appointed to organise the restitution of Italian artworks from France to Italy including the return of the horses to Venice. The horses were shunted around in Paris , first in the Invalides, then on gate piers at the entrance of the Tuileries and finally on the Arc du Carrousel. After Napoleon’s fall they were removed by Austrian and English engineers in 1815. On their arrival in Mestre they were placed on rafts and carefully floated over the lagoon before being hoisted up once more in front of St Mark’s Basilica.

When the horses had arrived in Paris they participated in the triumphal procession at the Champs de Mars in front of the Ecole Militaire. The procession coincided with the annual Festival of Liberty that marked the fall of Robespierre and the end of the period simply known as ‘The Terror.’ On the 9th July 1798, 45 cases were loaded onto the carts that had brought them from Italy. Napoleon had already left for Egypt on 19th May. The procession was divided into three groups; manuscripts and books, natural history and art.

A contemporary engraving of the procession shows a full triumphal procession based on the model of ancient Rome. The carts, decked with trees and exotic flowers, and exotic animals such as camels and lions, interweave the wagons whilst cavalry and troops bearing banners and bands march alongside, reminiscent of Pompey’s Triumph in 61 BC and the Flavian Triumph of 71. A huge crowd of fashionable Parisians look on.

The procession left the Museum of Natural History and snaked its way across Paris, arriving at the Champs de Mars in late afternoon. All the artworks were in their boxes except the four horses, which were mounted on a cart. Banners and inscriptions explained what was in each box. In front of the arts division a banner proclaimed, ‘Monuments of antique sculpture, Greece gave them up, Rome lost them, their fate has twice changed, it will not change again.’[23] Above the horses a banner read, ‘Horses transported from Corinth to Rome and from Rome to Constantinople to Venice. They are finally on free soil.’[24]



***Apollo Belvedere.* Ancient Greek (*c.* 400-323 BC) marble.**

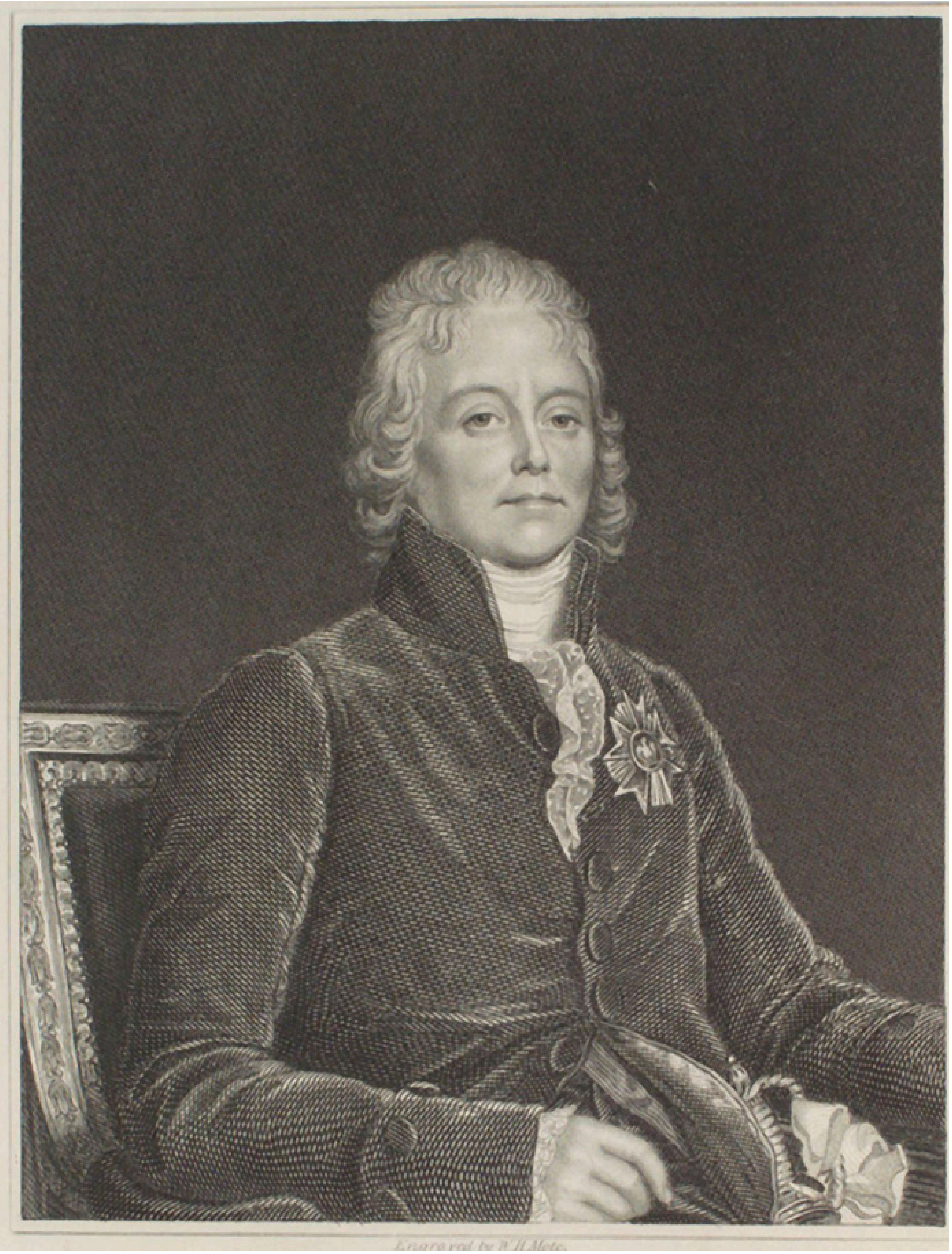
On the cart bearing the Apollo Belvedere and Clio the banner read, ‘Both will reiterate our battles, our victories.’[25] The banner preceding the paintings simply read, ‘Artists hurry! Your masters have arrived.’[26] A song, written for the occasion, was full of vanquished tyrants, trophies, and the French Republic’s right to plunder.

Upon arrival in the Champs de Mars Commissioner Thouin gave a speech loaded with Triumphal overtones. A line in the song summed up the occasion, ‘Rome is no more in Rome, Every hero, Every great man, has changed country, Rome is no more in Rome, It is all in Paris!’[27] The mood in Paris was joyful and celebratory. Booty on this scale arriving on the streets of Paris was tangible and brought the reality of the tremendous victories of the Napoleonic armies directly to the people.

The Sèvres porcelain factory produced an ‘Etruscan-style’ (actually Greek) volute krater in 1813 to commemorate the event, an example of which is kept in the Musée National de Ceramique at Sèvres. A polychrome painting runs in a strip around the middle of the krater, representing ‘L’Entrée à Paris des oeuvres destinées au Musée Napoléon’ and showing an idealised depiction of the procession recalling the plaque on the inside of the arch of Trajan. The sculpture has been removed from the crates and the viewer can see the Apollo Belvedere, the Laocoön and the Medici Venus. The four medallions in relief on top of the handles depict Napoleon, Augustus, Lorenzo di Medici and Pericles. Napoleonic looting was clearly inspired by the Roman model, which helped the Congress of Vienna in 1815 to come to the decision to return as much of the loot as possible.

Although the majority of revolutionary France appeared delighted with the arriving treasure, a small group of savants declared themselves horrified at, ‘precious relics arriving like coal barges and unloaded at the Quai de Louvre like boxes of soap.’[28] Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremere de Quincy (1755-1849), the archaeologist and writer, asked why France wasn’t happy with her own considerable treasures. Why didn’t France exploit her own considerable Roman heritage in Provence? He protests against the ruination of, ‘that great laboratory, Rome’ and continues, ‘We should reassemble there once more all those monuments which misguided enthusiasm has removed from the city.’[29]

De Quincy believed that outstanding pieces of art had a universal quality and should remain in the context intended by the artist. He credits this idea to Cicero but in fact it first belongs to Polybius and was later modified by Cicero for his *Verrines*.


Engraved by W. H. Mote

Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, Prince de Benevento **(1754-1838). Engraving from a portrait by.William Henry Mote (1803-1871)**

Napoleon moved in to the castle of Montebello near Milan to work on a constitution for the new republic modelled on that of France whilst enjoying a new near-regal role. He was able to give generous presents to his generals and family because the recent campaign had already yielded 7 million francs, and the Pope had paid his first instalment of 8 million francs with diamonds. Napoleon was also expecting the Venetian payment, and a further 5 million francs from the Duke of Modena along with provisions and supplies worth 14 million francs from various states.

Lured by funds and talk of diamonds, Josephine had arrived from Paris but found life at Montebello provincial. Others such as the young Colonel Marmont reported it was, 'movement, grandeur, expectation and gaiety.'[30] Napoleon's mother and sisters never tired of trying to undermine Josephine who found the people dull and missed the *soirées* of Paris and its boutiques full of whatever was *a la mode*.

Napoleon gave officers and soldiers presents and medals and improved their equipment and lodgings. Napoleon was fond of saying, 'Men will do anything for baubles' and promoted men on merit whilst saying, 'Ambition is a poor man's wealth.' He used to ask, 'Est-il hereux?' (is he lucky?).

A Paris police report of 28th October said, '(Napoleon's) praises are sung by everybody. People were embracing each other in the street in pronouncing his name. Workers drank to his health ... Theatres played appropriate works in his honour. To win applause, actors had only to mention his name.'[31]

Napoleon brokered peace with Austria, the treaty of Campo Formio, in August 1797 and returned to Paris as the conquering hero. He liaised with France's new Foreign Minister, Talleyrand, and started an ambitious plan to invade England. This never came to fruition but had he done so, then perhaps all England's greatest treasures would also have found their way to Paris. Instead he turned his attention to invading Egypt.

Napoleon believed that conquering Egypt would replenish France's empty treasury, provide treasures, and threaten English control of India whilst spreading revolution to the downtrodden Egyptian people. Before he left he tasked the commissioners Gaspard Monge and Claude Berthollet, to put together a team of surgeons, draughtsmen, botanists, physicians, geologists, scholars, mathematicians, engineers and chemists. In all, 167 of France's leading lights headed up a team of around 500 savants. Napoleon, an avid reader, took his library of 300 volumes, which included copies of the Bible, Hindu epics, the Koran and historical and philosophical books.

The soldiers referred to these civilians contemptuously as the ‘donkeys’, but their influence was to remain long after the collapse of the brief French occupation, and the knowledge they brought back to Europe sparked 150 years of Egyptmania.

The fleet left for Egypt on 19th May 1798 shortly after Napoleon had been elected a member of the French Academy of Sciences. He named the working group of scholars the Scientific and Artistic Commission and they were housed in a large Cairene palace. For the 3 years of the occupation the Commission followed the soldiers recording and investigating. By combining zoology, archaeology, hydraulics and astronomy, they laid the craze for all things Egyptian.

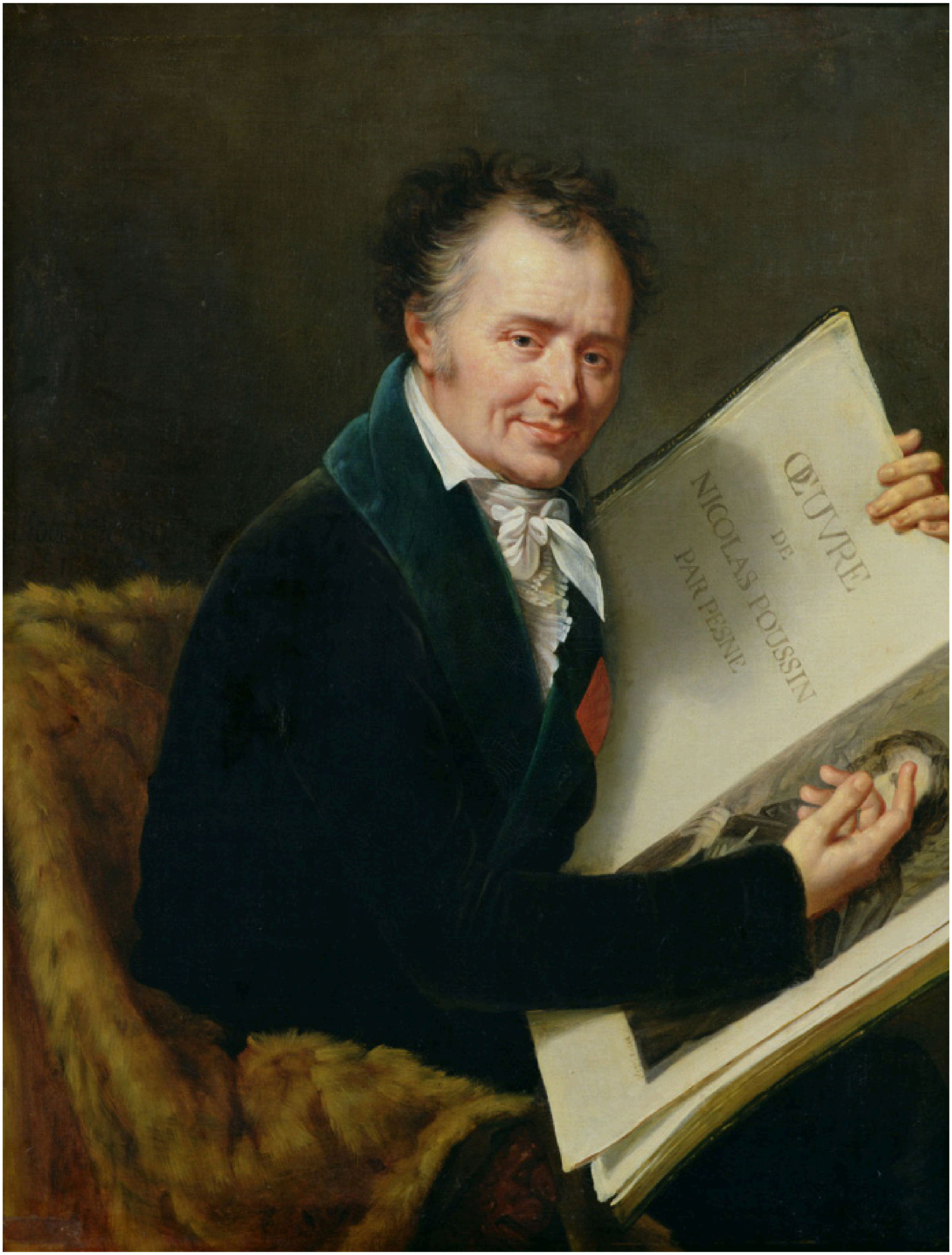
On route to Egypt Napoleon took Malta on the 9th June 1798, which provided 1,200 cannon, 30,000 muskets, 7,000 barrels of powder, 6 warships including 700 chained Turkish slaves and one of the best natural harbours in the Mediterranean. The treasury of the Grand Master of the Knights of Malta also yielded 5 million francs. Napoleon kept 700,000 francs for his war chest, much of it from gold and silver ingots obtained by melting down religious artefacts.

Napoleon avoided the British navy and landed at Alexandria on the 1st of July. His 20,000 troops defeated the bulk of the Turkish army (60,000 Mamelukes) at the battle of the Pyramids in July 1798. Francois Bernoyer reported back to his wife, ‘We were crushed by thirst and exhaustion. My throat was parched, my breath a burning vapour.’[32]

Napoleon was still constantly harried by small groups of Turks and his troops were never safe. Arabs did not make good regular soldiers but excelled at insurgency, setting ambushes and harrying convoys. Napoleon responded with brutal tactics, burning entire villages and impaling the heads of troublemakers on sticks. Such tactics became a centrepiece of his political and military theory, and, ‘pour encourager les autres’ from Voltaire’s satirical novel *Candide* became a favourite expression of Napoleon’s urbane Foreign Minister Talleyrand.

Rear Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson destroyed the French Fleet in Abukir Bay. The commandant of Jaffa (modern Tel Aviv) unwisely beheaded an emissary of Napoleon’s. When the French soldiers broke through the walls, they killed an estimated 2,000 Turkish soldiers. Another 2,000 Turks surrendered when Eugene Beauharnais, Josephine’s son, offered them amnesty. Napoleon was furious saying, ‘what do they want me to do with them?’[33] and agonised for 2 days before deciding to kill them. He sent a laconic message to General Kleber, ‘The garrison at Jaffa numbered around 4,000 men; 2,000 have been killed in the city and 2000 have been shot between yesterday and today.’[34]

Whilst Napoleon struggled to control Egypt the Commission researched and gathered up interesting artefacts and treasures to be sent to France. The Institute of Egypt for Arts and Sciences was launched with a ceremony in Cairo. Napoleon was vice president and Gaspard Monge president. Housed in a mansion on Ezbekyeh Square it contained chemistry and physics laboratories and printing presses. It divided its activities into: literature and arts, politics, mathematics, and physics.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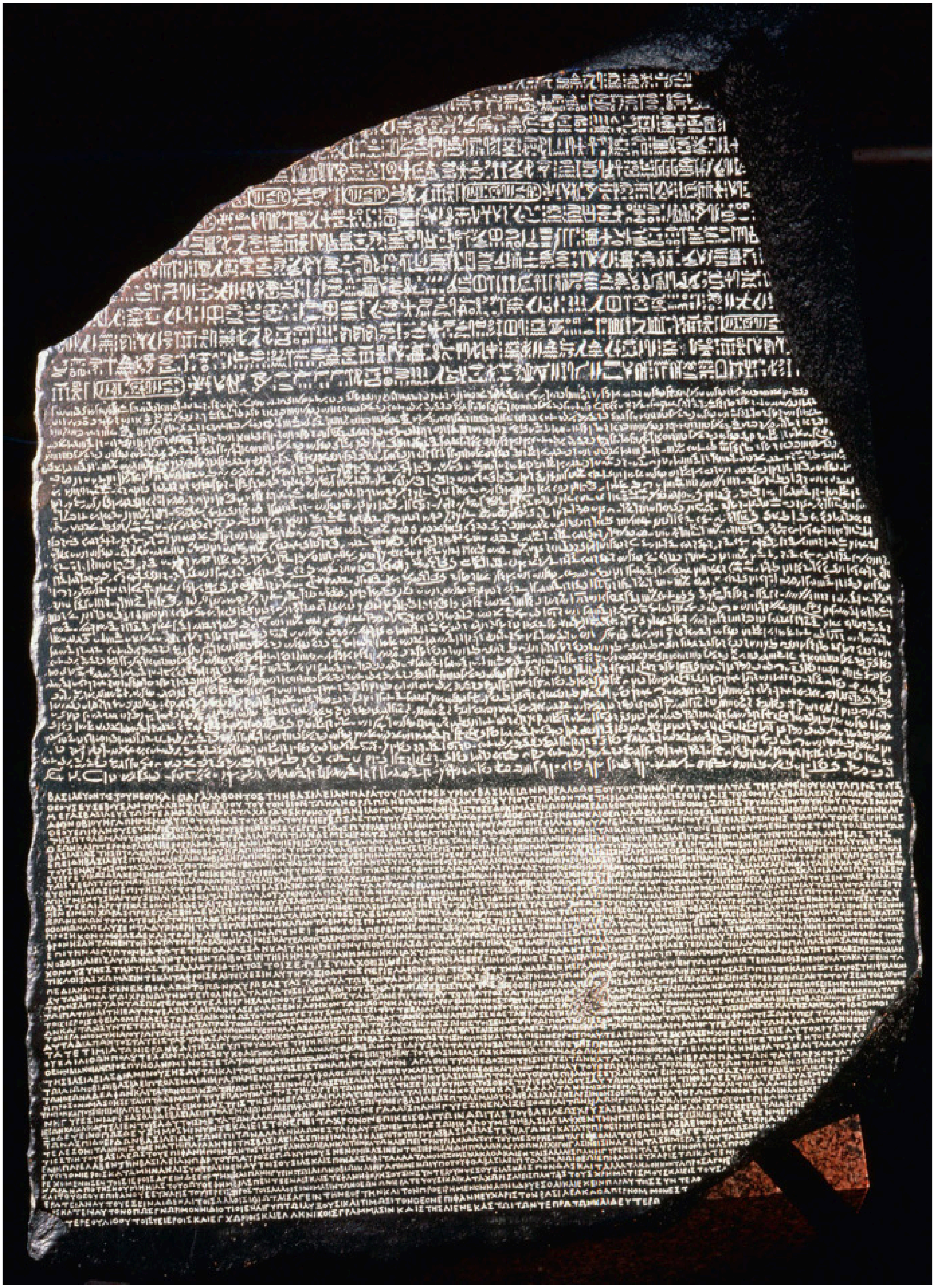
***Dominique Vivant, Baron Denon* (1747-1825 by Robert Lefevre (1755-1830)**

One of the leading members of the Commission was Baron Dominique Vivant Denon (1747-1825) who specialised in Ancient Egyptian buildings and architecture. He later became Director of the Musée Napoleon and was the brain behind the looting of Europe. He also masterminded obstructing the Allies after 1815, when they came to try and return the looted items.

Denon was born an aristocrat and his portrait shows a powerful-looking man with wide-set eyes and a flat, ugly face. However, his charms conquered Madame de Pompadour, Josephine and Catherine the Great of Russia. Although originally set for the law, he gravitated towards the arts and became a favourite of Louis XV who entrusted him with the medal and gem collection of Madame de Pompadour. As attaché to the French Embassy in St Petersburg he met Catherine the Great. He made fine etchings of monuments in Italy and Sweden and spent time with Voltaire. He survived the revolution spending time in Italy and Switzerland. Through his friendship with the painter David he managed to get work furnishing designs for revolutionary costumes and made a living as a draughtsman. His erotic drawings were always in demand in Paris.



The Rosetta Stone. Basalt slab inscribed with decree of Pharaoh Ptolemy Epiphanes (205-180 BC) in three languages, Greek, Hieroglyphic and Demotic script. Discovered near Rosetta in Egypt in 1799.

Napoleon never inquired how close Denon was to Josephine when he first met him at one of her *soirées*. Napoleon saw the potential of this man who had the physique of a boxer, the charm of a sophisticated roué and yet could also execute drawings and watercolours of extreme sensitivity. Denon was impressed with Egypt and the Egyptian architecture which he later described as having, 'no extraneous ornament or superfluity of lines.'[35]

Denon demonstrated bravery and fitness keeping up with troops who marched 30 miles a day. He often sketched while under fire and said he once spent 16 hours in the saddle, sketching, his vision obscured by stinging sand and with blood running into his eyes. The result was his two-volume book, *Voyages dans la basse et la haute Egypte*, translated into all the major European languages, a best seller that started the craze of Egyptmania.

On later campaigns in Austria, Spain and Poland he advised Napoleon on what to take. Whilst in Egypt he tried to select outstanding pieces for France. Some proved too big even for the French army and he had to be content with drawing and measuring them. He engraved his team measuring the fist of Ramesses II at Memphis in 1798 and included it in his book. He failed to remove the huge 2.7-metre-high granite statue of the *Younger Memnon* or *Ramesses II* from the Ramesseum at Thebes. The 7.5 ton statue was later removed by the adventurer Giovanni Belzoni in 1815 and sold to the British Consul General Henry Salt, who sold it to the British Museum in 1821, where it still resides today in Room 4. A hole remains in its right torso just above Ramesses' right nipple from Denon's failed attempt to remove it.

The greatest discovery by Denon's men was the Ptolemaic era stone of black basalt found in 1799, known as the Rosetta Stone. The three bands of language on it were written in hieroglyphic Egyptian, demotic Egyptian and classical Greek, which later allowed Thomas Young and Jean-François Champollion to crack the code of hieroglyphics. The Rosetta Stone was discovered whilst doing construction work at Rashid (Rosetta) harbour on the Mediterranean coast.

Unfortunately for France, in 1801 General Menon surrendered to General John Hely-Hutchinson and the British claimed all the antiquities as the spoils of war. A member of the French Commission, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire said, 'Sooner than permit this iniquitous and vandal spoliation we will destroy our property, we will scatter it among the Libyan sands or throw it in the sea. It is celebrity you are aiming for? Very well, you can count on the long memory of history. You also will have burnt a library in Alexandria.'[36].

Hely-Hutchinson allowed the French to keep some of their antiquities but insisted they hand over the Rosetta Stone. George III sent a message that it was to be brought to England at all costs. The French then tried to smuggle the stone out of Egypt. William Hamilton, former secretary to Lord Elgin had just arrived in Alexandria, and after a tense scene succeeded in removing the stone, although the soldier who transported the stone to England, Colonel Tomkyns Hilgrove Turner, later claimed he personally seized it from the French. Turner brought the stone to England on the captured French frigate, *L'Egyptiane*, arriving in February 1802. On 11th March it was presented to the Society of Antiquaries who in turn gave it to the British Museum, where it remains today.

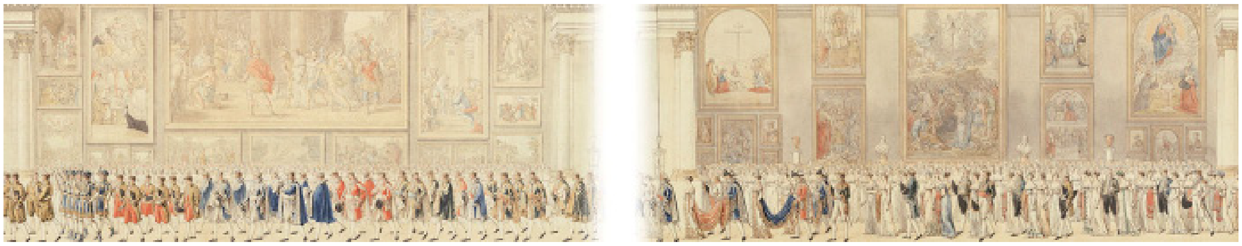
In June 2003 Egypt demanded the return of the stone. Dr Zahi Hawass, secretary general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Cairo told the press, 'If the British want to be remembered, if they want to restore their reputation, they should volunteer to return the Rosetta Stone because it is the icon of our Egyptian identity.' In 2005, Hawass tried to negotiate a 3-month loan with the goal of an eventual permanent return of the stone. The British Museum sent him a replica in November 2005 but they have no intention of returning the stone or any other disputed items such as the Elgin marbles or the Benin Bronzes.

News of Josephine's infidelities finally reached Napoleon via Andoche Junot on 17th February 1799. 'I never saw him exhibit such an air of dissatisfaction or appear so much under the influence of some prepossession,' observed General Bourrienne.[37] Josephine managed to survive this affair and countless other indiscretions and Napoleon only finally divorced her in 1810 when she couldn't bear him an heir.

Local women were brought to him but he complained they were dirty and overweight. Instead he took the spirited wife of a junior officer as his mistress. Pauline Ferres had managed to get to Egypt disguised as a Hussar. She dressed as a general, rode around with a tricorn hat and became a favourite with the troops, who called her Cleopatra. Napoleon despatched her young husband back to Paris, but he was captured by the English, who took great delight in returning him to Egypt. Ferres divorced her husband

and remained Napoleon’s mistress for the duration of the campaign, but also fell from favour when she couldn’t bear him a child.

Napoleon left Egypt for Paris, arriving in October 1799 and raised himself to First Consul and finally Emperor in 1806. The coronation gives clues to his megalomania. He drew up the plans himself and persuaded the ailing Pope Pius VII to carry out the service to legitimise it. Preparations took months and cost millions of francs. The interior of Notre Dame was converted into a Greco-Roman Temple. Napoleon wore a red velvet cloak with gold hems and ermine drapes with embroidered bees and an insignia of the Legion of Honour made out of diamonds. His sword had a huge diamond mounted in the hilt.



Le Cortège nuptial de Napoléon et de Marie Louise d’Autriche. A travers la Grande Galerie du Louvre, le 2 avril 1810 **by Benjamin Zix.**

Paintings by Ingres and Baron Gérard record Napoleon sitting adorned with a Roman crown of gold laurel leaves and holding a gold staff and sceptre. Josephine wore a white satin gown trimmed with gold and silver and sprinklings of bees, a jewelled waist girdle and a diadem of enormous pearls, rubies and diamonds. After Napoleon placed the first crown on his head and then one on Josephine’s, they sat on their thrones, a scene portrayed in David’s famous painting. Napoleon reputedly said to Josephine at the moment of crowning, ‘If only our Father could see us now.’[38] The Emperor and his Empress then proceeded to the Tuileries by torch-lined route whilst thousands of people cheered along the way.

Behaviour at court incorporated Imperial standards. Josephine sported enormous sapphires, rubies and diamonds taken from the public treasury and deemed Imperial property. She chose paintings and artworks for her own purposes, either to sell for cash or to decorate Malmaison, her exquisite little palace outside Paris. Talleyrand became Grand Chamberlain, Berthier, Grand Master of the Hounds and Caulaincourt, Master of the Horse. Fourteen serving generals became marshals and Napoleon’s family were all elevated to prince or princess. Liveried staff were in attendance with a footman behind every chair. Napoleon addressed the Tsar of Russia and

King George of England as *Mon Frère* in correspondence, much to their private annoyance.

Napoleon continued to defeat the armies of the coalitions against him, which normally included Britain, Austria and Russia. Britain defeated Napoleon at Trafalgar in 1805 but the French dominated on land for a decade. At Austerlitz on 2nd December 1805 Napoleon lured the Russians and Austrians into a trap. The Russian generals were drunk and couldn't understand the orders in German. The Austrians under Weyrother were tactically 20 years out of date. Napoleon cut them to pieces with his cannon followed by cavalry charges. A third of the Russian army was destroyed and most of their cannon and baggage captured.

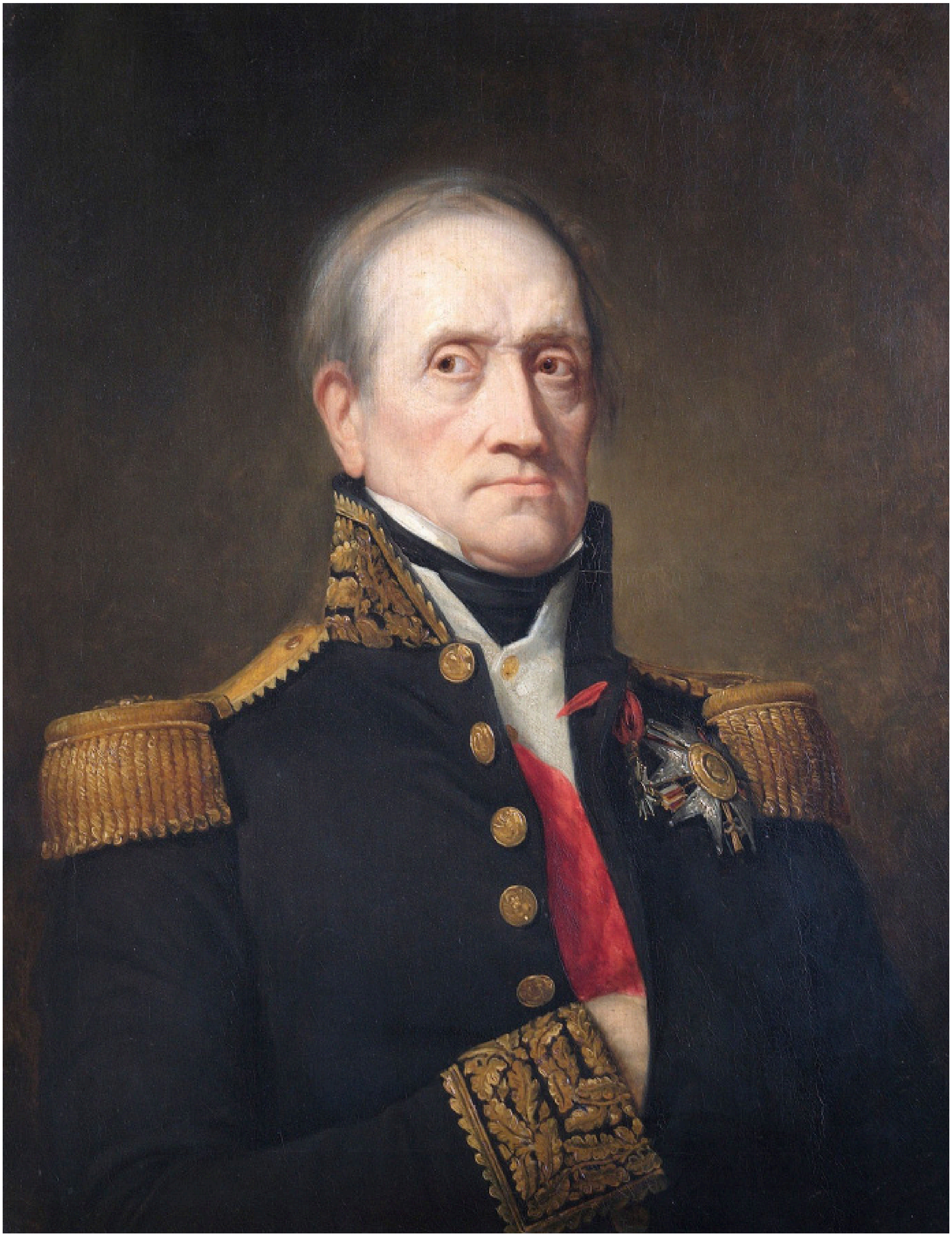
Denon often accompanied the conquering army advising Napoleon on what to plunder. Denon was the prototype for today's museum director and divided the holdings of the Musée Napoleon into separate departments. He was determined to build the Museum into the world's greatest, and could choose what he wanted from the conquered territories. The wagons rolled back to Paris with the heritage of six nations.

Denon had some able deputies such as Daru, the Venetian scholar and Henri Beyle, better known to posterity by his nom de plume, Stendhal. Stendhal's most famous work is his 1822 classic *On Love* with its beautiful metaphor of the twig slowly circling downwards in the pool in the salt mine attracting salt crystals until it is not clear to the viewer whether he is looking at a twig or a crystal.

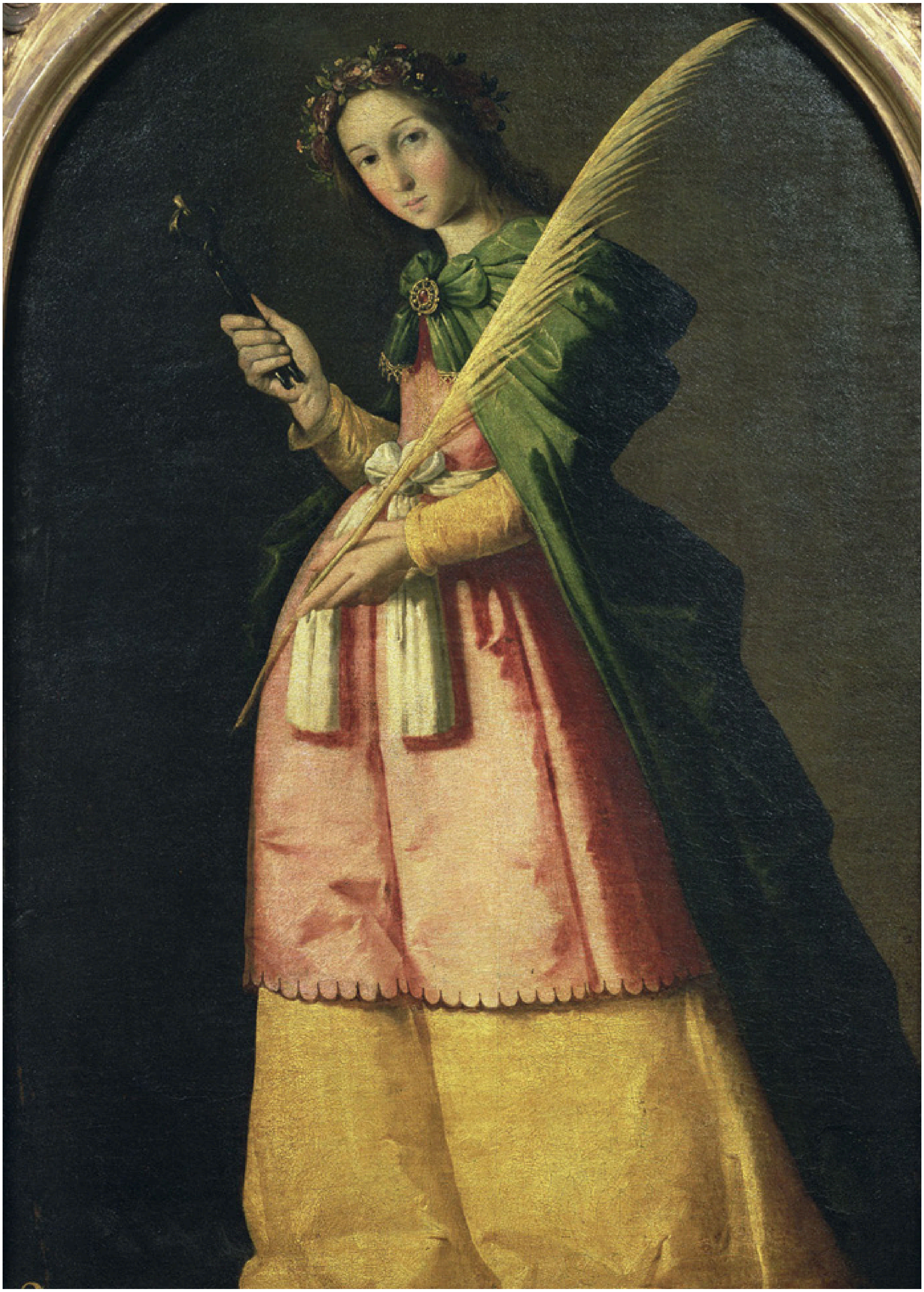
Although only in his early 20s, Stendhal concentrated on books and libraries, but ensured that everything he took was covered under treaty and supposedly 'legal'. Germany suffered badly and the commissioners visited Aachen, which had been the seat of Europe's first great Emperor, Charlemagne. The commissioners removed the antique marble and granite columns from the Hochminster (the 16-sided gallery) in Aachen cathedral, which had been brought from Rome, Ravenna and Trier on Charlemagne's orders. These were restored to Aachen after 1815. They shipped Charlemagne's tomb back to Paris with most of his 1,000-year-old bones inside. Berlin lost paintings, Cologne its famous stained glass and Potsdam its collection of medallions and gems.

Religious foundations were emptied of treasures. The Duke of Brunswick lost 78 paintings, including some by Titian, Rembrandt and Rubens, and his library. It was inevitable that some of Napoleon's family and his marshals started to build their own collections. Josephine built a collection of paintings and *objets* at Chateau de Malmaison. Although Napoleon had been furious with her for spending 300,000 francs on the run-down property outside of Paris when he was away in Egypt, they had many happy times in the beautiful house set in 150 acres.

Josephine ran up enormous bills in the shops and then refused to pay the tradesman more than half, embarrassing everybody. When jewels or paintings arrived, she was first to see Denon and find out what she could appropriate, just as, in the early 1940s, Hermann Goering liked to be first to the Jeu de Paume Museum in Paris to cherry-pick from the artworks looted by the Nazis. Josephine also sought out flora and fauna for the garden, hoping the chateau and garden would become a centre of richness for all of France. A walk through the charming house and grounds today provides an echo of what it must have been like.

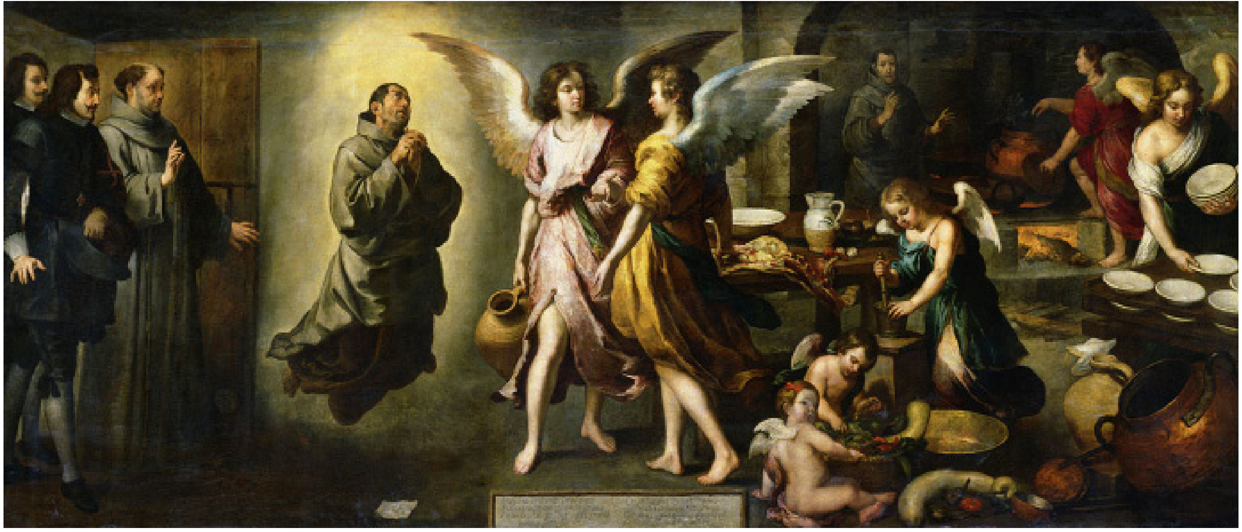


Marshal Nicolas Jean de Dieu Soult, Duc de Dalmatie (1769-1851) by George Peter Alexander Healy (1840).



St Apollonia c. **1636 by Francisco de Zurbaran (1598-1664).**

When Napoleon's brother Lucien refused to abandon his mistress on Napoleon's orders, he had to give up his magnificent Paris mansion and beautiful Château de Plessis. His art gallery contained works by 130 important masters.



The Angels' Kitchen **(1646) by Bartolome Esteban Murillo (1618-1682).**

Spain also suffered severe looting after Napoleon's invasion in 1808. Although Napoleon's brother Joseph Bonaparte was the nominal King of Spain, it was actually run by his chief of staff Marshal Soult, both of whom amassed enormous art collections. Marshal Nicholas Jean de Dieu Soult, Duc de Dalmatia (1769-1851) became one of Napoleon's most capable marshals. He survived the fall of Napoleon and went on to become Minister of War for France. More than 20 years later, attending the Coronation of Queen Victoria in London as France's representative, he felt someone grab his arm. The Duke of Wellington was holding him, and reputedly said with a smile, 'I have got you at last.'

Soult joined the army at 16 as a private. He fought his way through virtually every battle in Napoleon's campaigns taking the vital Pratzen heights at Austerlitz. He combined the organisational qualities of a non-commissioned officer with the intellectual qualities of a general.

Soult developed a liking for art and acquired a sure eye for quality. In Spain he plundered some outstanding paintings of the Spanish school including works by Ribera, Murillo, Zurbaran and Velasquez. He particularly liked Cano and Zurbaran's work and obtained paintings such as Cano's *St Ines* (formerly in Berlin and destroyed in World War II) and *St Catherin'* (now in a private collection in Spain), Zurbaran's *St Apollonia* and the two

Zurbaran masterpieces now in the Louvre, *The Exposing of the Body of St Bonaventure* and *St Bonaventure Disputing at the Council of Lyons with the Envoys of the Emperor Palaeologus*.

Soult regularly held towns to ransom and cut off their supplies until they told him where they had hidden their paintings. Unlike Joseph Bonaparte, Soult managed to transport his collection back to France. Napoleon said, ‘I should have made a great example and had Soult shot; he was the greatest pillager of them all’ and, ‘Both [Soult and Talleyrand] put money before everything else; they wanted a royal suite and money, always money.’

Joseph Bonaparte’s collection, captured in a baggage train by the Duke of Wellington after the battle of Vitoria, is now in Apsley House, London (the former London home of the Duke and now a museum still maintaining the impressive address of No. 1, London). This defeat, on 21st June 1813, put an end to French rule in Spain. Joseph fled his carriage and in it Wellington found at least 165 paintings, the canvases cut from their stretchers, including works by Correggio, Velasquez and Rubens, Titian and Van Dyck.

Under Louis-Philippe, the French State tried unsuccessfully to buy Soult’s collection *en bloc*. However, the Louvre did buy some of the most important paintings privately in 1858 and 1867, *St Basil* by Herrera, *The Angels Kitchen* and *The Birth of the Virgin* by Murillo, the two great scenes by Zurbaran from the life of St Bonaventure, and the small *St Apollonia* by Zurbaran.

Most of the collection was sold in 1852 in Paris after Soult’s death. At his sale the Louvre also bought the famous *Immaculate Conception* by Murillo for the fantastic sum of 586,000 francs. In 1940 this painting went to the Prado as part of an exchange. Some of the better paintings were bought by the Scottish collector, Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, and can now be seen at Pollok House outside Glasgow.

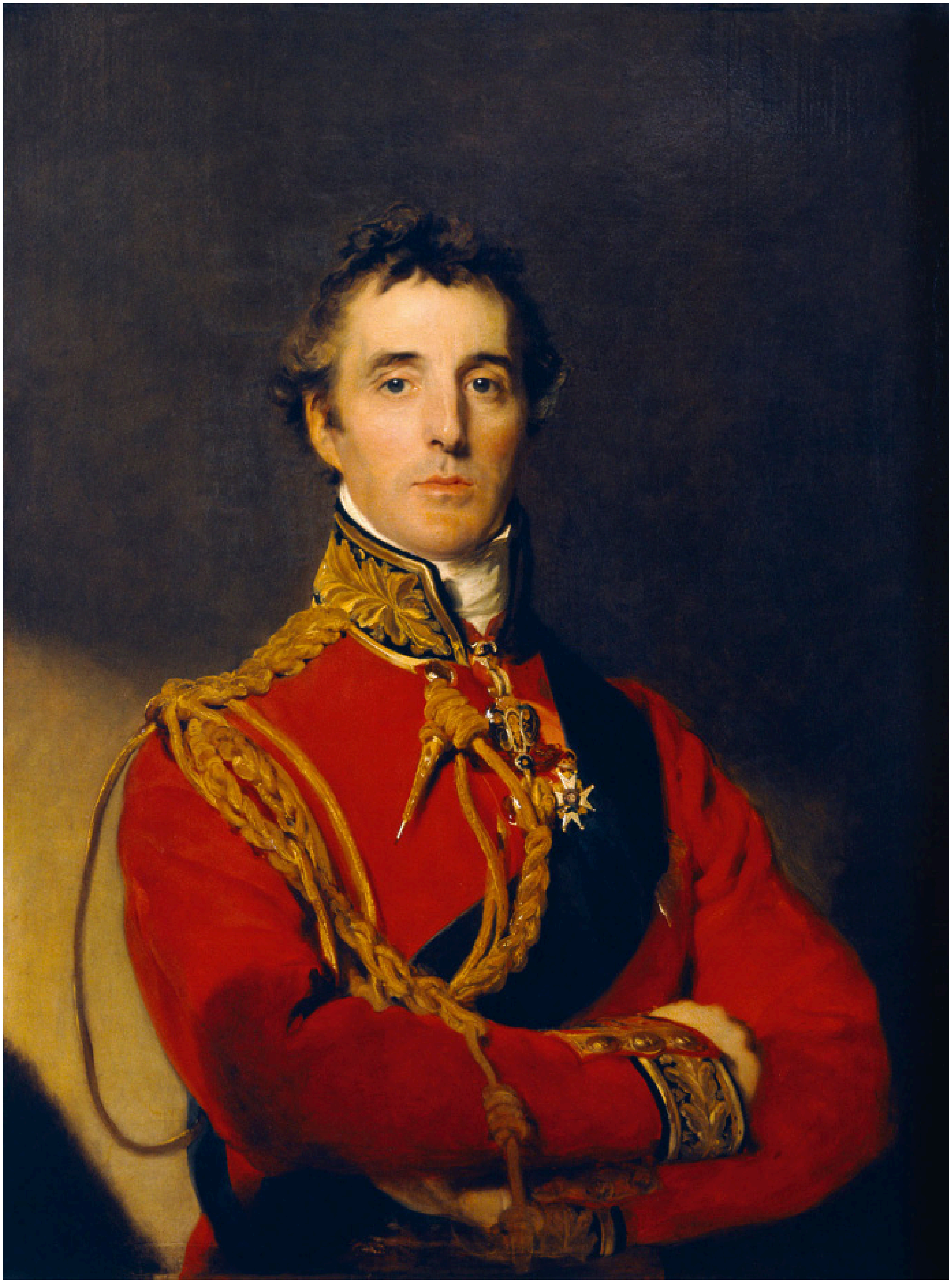
Another survivor who amassed a huge fortune and extensive art collection was Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord (1754-1838). who worked successfully for the regimes of Louis XVI, the Directory, Napoleon I, Louis XVIII, Charles X and Louis-Philippe. ‘Talleyrand’ was one of the most influential and cunning European diplomats of the era.

Ordained, he left France during the Terror and spent time in England and the USA. Returning to become Foreign Minister in 1797 he worked closely with Napoleon. When Napoleon flew into one of his rages, Talleyrand maintained a cool aristocratic *froideur* and waited until Napoleon calmed down. Talleyrand extracted payments for state duties performed and from foreign states when in negotiations, becoming one of the richest men in France. He bought Château de Valencay, filling it with Old Master drawings. His art collection was mostly looted items but he also bought on the open market.

His Paris residence on Place de la Concorde was sold to James Meyer de Rothschild in 1812 and is now the US Embassy. He employed the renowned chef Careme and owned Château Haut Brion in Bordeaux. He negotiated for France in the Congress of Vienna before becoming Prince of Talleyrand, and coming out of retirement to be ambassador to Britain 1830-1834.

After Napoleon's final defeat by the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo, the rape of Europe and the looting ended until the rise of Adolf Hitler. Napoleon was imprisoned on St Helena in the Atlantic Ocean, where he died on 5th May 1821, either from stomach cancer or arsenic poisoning.

On 6th April 1814, Louis XVIII ascended the French throne. Restitution was the major topic of the day. On 8th May he announced he would return all the treasure but, in a true Bourbon muddle, by 4th June he announced, 'The glory of the French armies has not been tarnished, the monuments to their bravery remain, and the masterpieces of arts belong to us from now on by stronger rights than those of victory.'[39]



Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington (1769-1852) by Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830).

England felt that she had to ensure the restitution of stolen art and the prime minister, Lord Liverpool, explained, ‘It is most desirable in point of policy to remove them if possible from France as whilst in that country, they must necessarily have the effect of keeping up the remembrance of their former conquest and cherishing the military spirit and vanity of the nation.’[40]

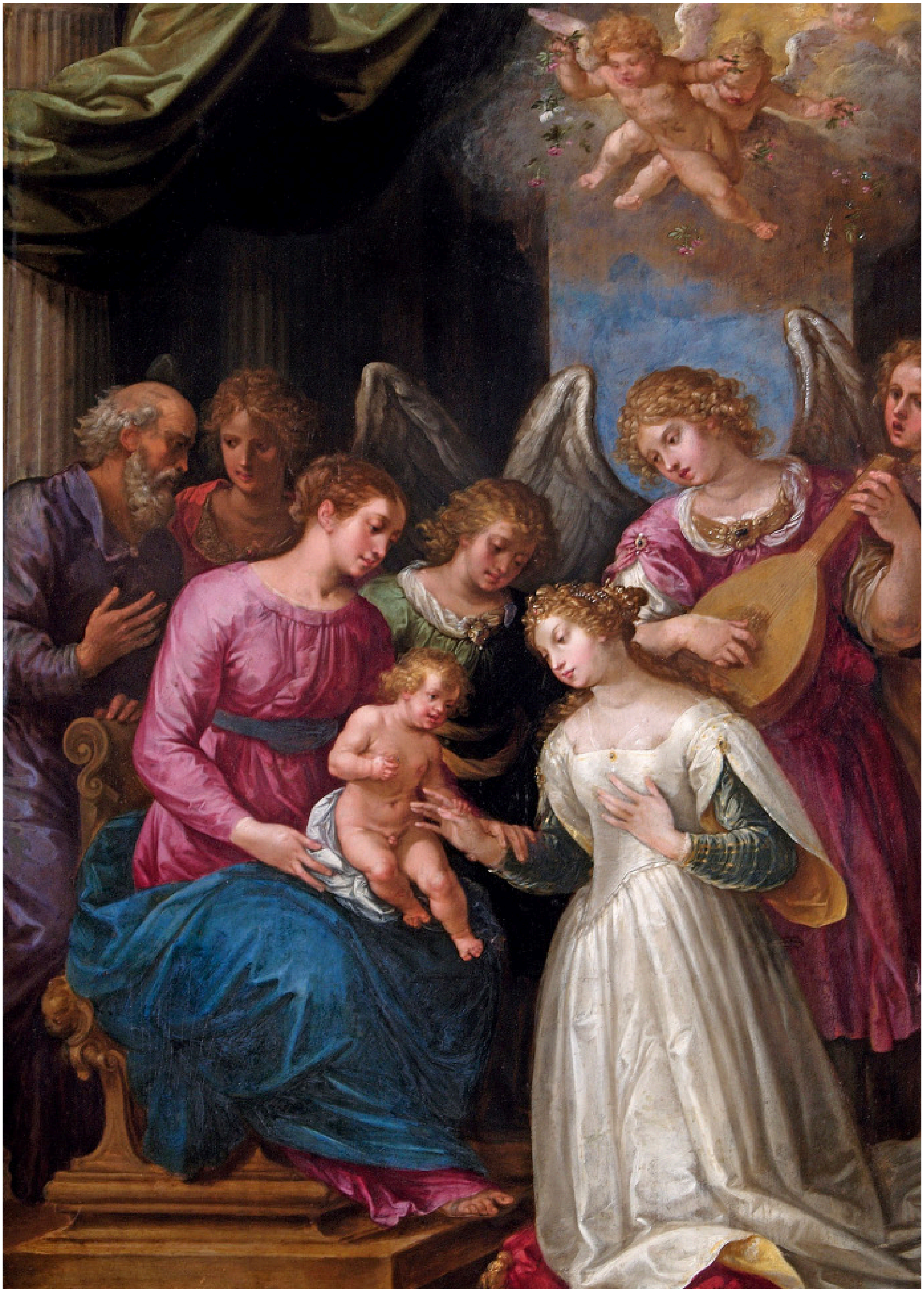
Ambassadors of the victors met at the Congress of Vienna held between September 1814 and June 1815 to thrash out the restitution, the peace and re-draw the map of Europe. Castlereagh, Wellington, Hardenberg, Metternich, Tsar Alexander I, Talleyrand - the names read like a Who’s Who of European politics. Talleyrand negotiated masterfully for France, resisting restitution, as did the commissioners such as Denon and Stendhal. The victors argued about to whom various artworks should be restituted.

The Duke of Wellington made a personal appeal that all artworks should be restored to their respective owners. The Duke wrote on 3rd September 1815, to Viscount Castlereagh urging him to push for the complete restitution of looted artworks:

> It is, besides, on many accounts, desirable, as well for their own happiness as that of the world, that the people of France, if they do not already feel that Europe is too strong for them, should be made sensible of it... Not only, then, would it, in my opinion, be unjust in the Sovereigns to gratify the people of France on this subject, at the expense of their own people, but the sacrifice they would make would be impolite, as it would deprive them of the opportunity of giving the people of France a great moral lesson.

Antonio Canova, tasked by the Pope to ensure the return of the Vatican’s treasures wrote gratefully, ‘What gratitude ought we not feel towards the magnanimous British Nation! Fully does she deserve that the Arts, in return for this generous act, should join hand in hand to raise a perpetual monument to her name.’[41]

The Duke was just as forthright with his own collection of pictures captured from Joseph Bonaparte’s baggage after the battle of Vitoria. On 16th March 1814, he wrote to his brother, Lord Maryborough, ‘The baggage of King Joseph, after the battle of Vitoria, fell into my hands, after having been plundered by the soldiers... containing prints, drawings, and pictures. From the cursory glance which I took of them, the latter did not appear to me to be anything remarkable... I have (now) found that there are among them much finer pictures than I conceived there were.’[42] He explains that he had thought the pictures were probably looted in Italy not Spain.



***The Mystic Marriage of St Catherine* by a follower of Gieuseppe Cesari Il Cavaliere d'Arpino. Formerly in Spanish Royal Collection. Captured at Vitoria 1813.**

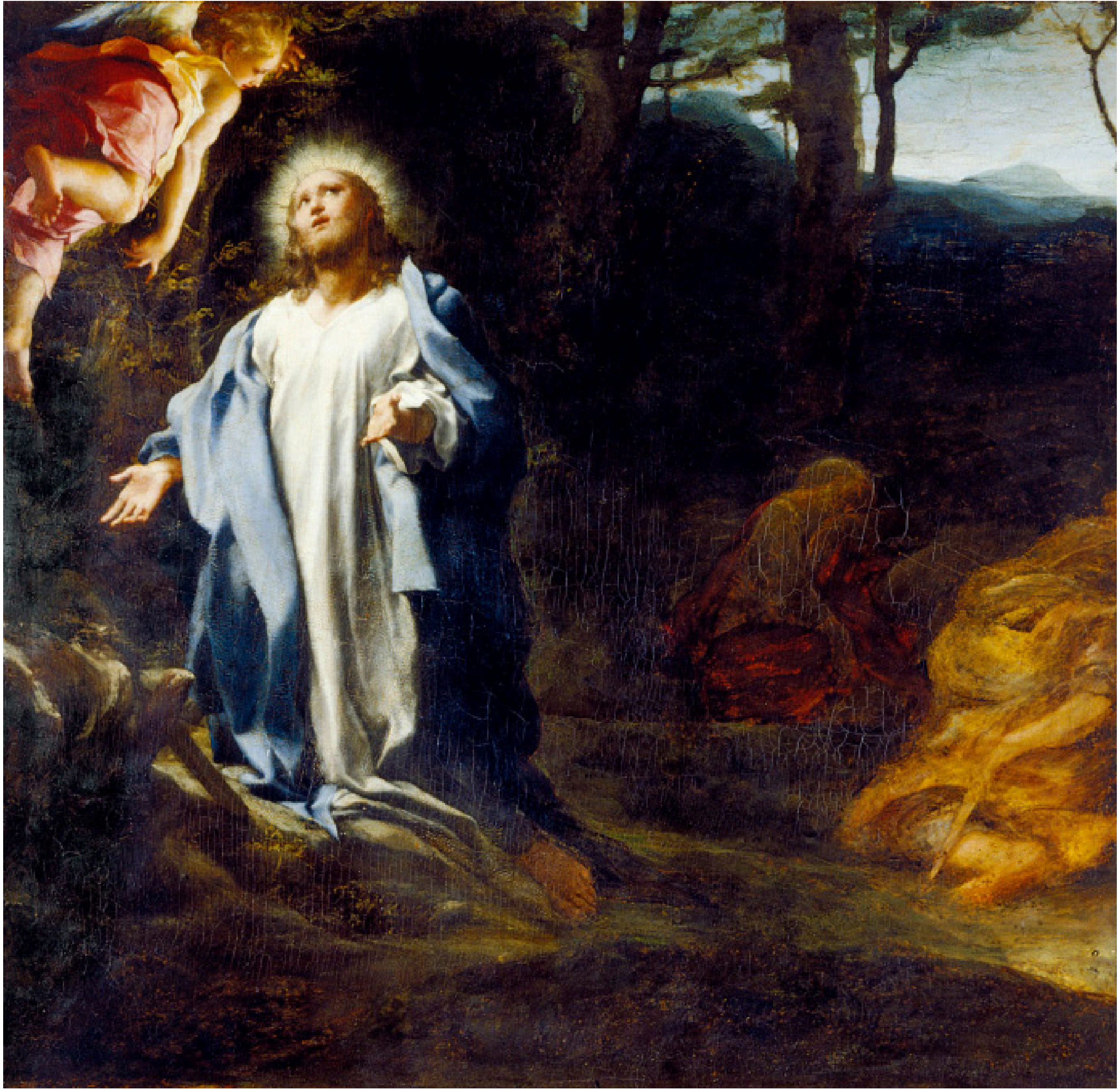
It seems likely that the Duke badly wanted to keep these paintings. It is hard to see how he can ever have thought he had stumbled across anything other than a cache of masterpieces. He had a knowledge of art and a good eye for quality as can be seen by his later purchases after the war. Had he acknowledged the quality of what he had found openly then he would have been questioned as to why he removed the pictures back to his house in England (where he knew it would be that much harder for Spain to demand their return).

Spain wanted its paintings back but felt intimidated by the Duke. In 1816 Ferdinand VII of Spain graciously ceded the paintings to the Duke citing gratitude for his throwing the French out of Spain. Of the 200 paintings in Apsley House, 83 have the provenance of coming from Joseph Bonaparte's collection. Correggio's *The Agony in the Garden* from the Spanish Royal collection was the Duke's favourite picture.

The Congress tried to develop a legal and ethical framework for the old Latin concept of *restitutus*. First, the legality of the treaties by which France had been ceded the more important artworks was examined. The English representatives, Lords Castlereagh and Liverpool, who hadn't had their country degraded, distinguished between items covered by treaty and items that were spoils of war. Those who had suffered at first hand, such as the Pope, German and Italian aristocrats and the King of the Netherlands, voiced their stringent opposition and, after intense debate, the Congress decided to return all items whether taken by force or treaty.

Although Emperor Justinian had been the first to raise the issue of restitution in his revision of Roman law, the *Sanctio Pragmatica* of AD 554, and Scipio had earlier returned some items to Sicily after the sack of Carthage in 149 BC, the idea of a blanket restitution was a new one. Whereas the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648 had tried to put a stop to further looting during the Thirty Years War, and the Treaty of the Pyrenees of 1659 had sought to establish some specific restitution measures at the end of a French-Spanish conflict, the Congress of Vienna introduced the first complete restitution after a major conflict. The Congress decided private and public art ownership should both benefit from a clear legal title that was upholdable and protectable. Those who had objected to the Napoleonic looting, such as the painter Jacques Louis David and the liberal thinker Antoine Quatremere de Quincy, vigorously championed this idea.

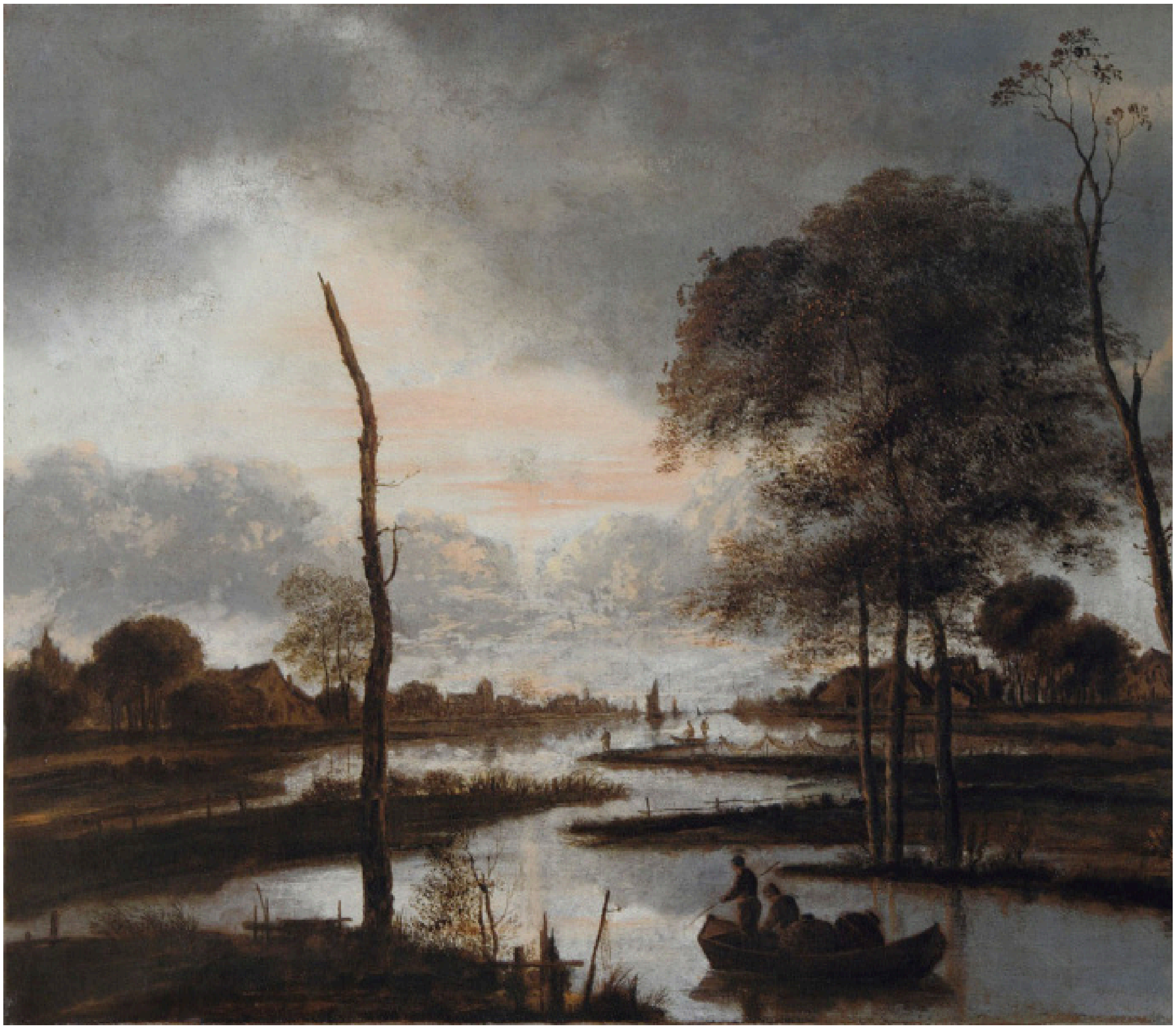
The *Horses of St Mark's* had at different stages belonged to Italy, Greece, Constantinople and Venice. The Congress returned them to Venice but a case could have been made for any of the other three. The Palatine Library was returned to Heidelberg although Napoleon had looted it from the Vatican. The Congress also felt that an over-rigorous approach might lead to a French rejection of the newly restored Bourbons and so they left everything outside Paris alone.



The Agony in the Garden **by Antonio Allegri, called Correggio (*c.* 1494-1534). (Luke xxii, 39-46) Previously from the Spanish Royal Collection. Captured by the Duke of Wellington at Vitoria in 1813.**

Belgium secured the van Eyck altarpiece from Ghent, which was to be stolen later by Hitler. Ribbentrop marched into the Louvre with troops and demanded to see Denon before starting to remove all Prussian material. When Denon objected, Ribbentrop threatened Denon with force before gathering all Prussian material, private and state owned, and returned it to its owners.

The Italians, Belgians, Spanish and Dutch all rapidly lodged claims. Denon fought them with every legal tactic he could think of. He was convinced that English jealousy was behind these claims, ‘England has in truth nothing to claim, but since she has brought the bas-reliefs of which Lord Elgin plundered the temple at Athens, now thinks she can become a rival to the Louvre and wants to deplete this museum in order to collect its remains.’[43]

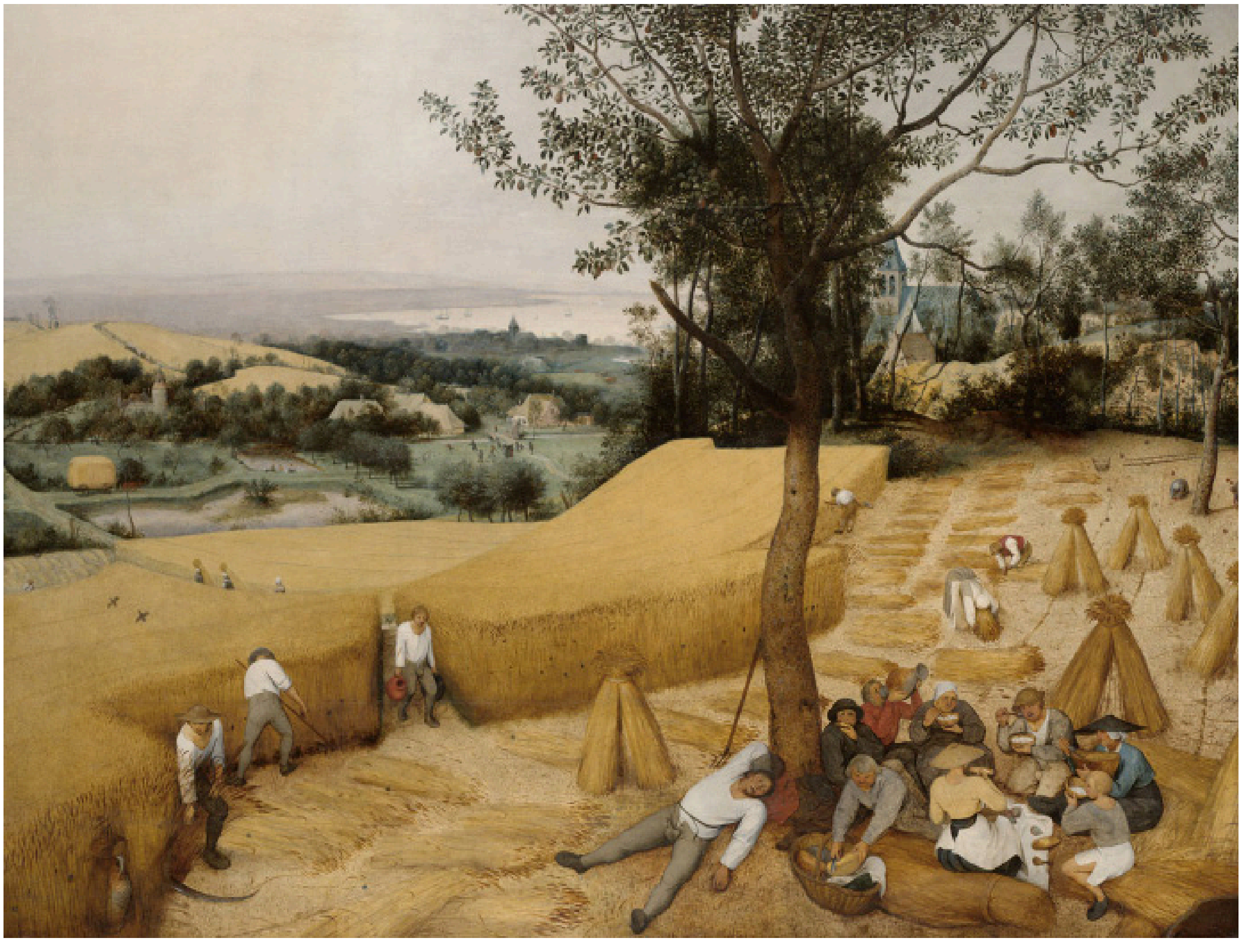


River view: Evening **by Aert van der Neer. Formerly in the Spanish Royal Collection. Captured at Vitoria, 1813**

There was some truth in Denon’s comments. The Prince Regent had dispatched William Hamilton to Paris. Hamilton had formerly been secretary to Lord Elgin, and had played a part in the recovery of the Rosetta Stone in Egypt. Hamilton was to try to commandeer some precious items from the Louvre for the British Museum. On arrival in Paris he wrote rather piously to the Earl of Bathurst, ‘We must necessarily give up the idea of procuring for ourselves any of the chef d’oeuvres from the Louvre. It would throw odium upon our exertion to restore stolen goods, and those French who are the most exasperated against the general measures of restitution already make use of this argument against our pretended disinterested exertion in the cause of justice... If accompanied with any proposal to our own benefit the whole will fall to the ground.’[44]

Not all the Allies were in favour of such a blanket restitution. Andrew Robertson, a young Scottish painter recorded a conversation with the painter Sir Thomas Lawrence, ‘That every artist must lament the breaking up of a collection in a place so central to Europe, for everything was laid open to the public with a degree of liberality unknown elsewhere.’[45] In Robertson’s letters to his family, he gives a sense that the Parisians felt outrage that their treasures were being stripped away. That the French had stolen these items in a war over the previous 15 years seems to have escaped them.

Stendhal was also carried along by this sentiment, ‘The allies have taken 1,150 pictures. I hope I may be permitted to observe that we acquired them by treaty. On the other hand, the Allies have taken our pictures without treaty.’[46] The real total was actually 2,065 paintings, 130 statues, 150 bas reliefs, 294 ‘divers objets’, 471 cameos, 271 drawings, 1199 enamels, 16 Etruscan vases, 289 bronzes, 150 ivory vases, 37 wood carvings, and 76 precious objects.



The Harvesters **(1565) by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1525-69).**

In addition to her own removal of jewels and paintings from the loot, Josephine had sold the entire Hessian collection of paintings to the Tsar, who reasoned that he had paid her real money for them and would not give them back. Just as after WWII, what went into Russia did not come out. There was nothing Hesse could do. Some of the columns from Aachen, had been structurally incorporated into the Louvre. Many former owners complained that their objects had been damaged beyond repair.

Napoleon had spread the treasures around and moved many to provincial museums. Possibly he wanted to share the revolutionary spoils around the country or he anticipated a restitution. Virtually everything outside of Paris was ignored and remained *in situ*. A tour around the provincial museums of France today still provides the constant surprise of finding masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance sleeping quietly in small town galleries such as the pair of Mantegnas in Tours, the Duke of Brunswick's Cornelis van Haarlem in Toulouse, the wings of Perugino's altarpiece from Perugia and about a fifth of the Hague's Mauritius museum collection spread around France.

The French provincial museums kept quiet about these treasures and they were little visited or studied. Tours, Montpelier and Lille did not have the same appeal to tourists as Florence, Rome or Venice. It was to take Teutonic efficiency and another major looting expedition to bring many of these masterpieces to the surface.

In 1940, a huge project was instigated by Nazi hierarchy whereby Germany was to repatriate all artworks that had been taken from Germany and dispersed throughout the world. This was to include artworks made by Germans and non-German art that had once been in Germany and lost abroad. The final report was written by the art historian Otto Kummel and became known as the Kummel report. Although never instigated, it provided a blueprint for Nazi looting.

The Kummel report was global and exhaustive. For France it carefully traced all artworks that had been removed from German territory by Napoleon. No French museum escaped scrutiny and the report demanded the return of 1,800 artworks of which 359 were in museums. The report distinguished works removed from Germany during the Munich campaign of 1806, the Kassel campaign of 1807 and Vienna campaign of 1809, a distinction still used in the provenances given by the Louvre catalogue. From the city of Kassel alone, Napoleon took 299 paintings including four Rubens, one Titian and 16 Rembrandts. Frederick the Great had lost his collections from Potsdam and Berlin.

The Kummel report also traced and demanded the return of artworks looted by Napoleon from Germany and which by 1940 were in major museums in countries outside France. The report established that the Metropolitan Museum in New York had *The Hay Harvest* by Pieter Brueghel the Elder, which had been removed from Vienna in 1809, Van Dyck's *Portrait of a Man* taken from Kassel in 1806 and Rembrandt's *Portrait of a Man* from Frankfurt. The Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg also had paintings by Andrea del Sarto and a Claude Lorraine seized by Napoleon's army from Germany.

The Nazis unearthed many works that had been missed by the Congress of Vienna in the Louvre such as Rembrandt's *Self portrait* taken in 1806 and seven works by Dürer taken from the Albertina Museum in Vienna in 1809, including his famous *Portrait of Erasmus*. They found a Rubens in the museum in Rouen and Tintoretto's *Danae* in Lyons. Thus, 150 years after the

Napoleonic era, the French would find themselves desperately hiding these artworks as the Commissioners of Adolf Hitler sought to remove them.

[1] Lung, Th., *Bonaparte et son Temps 1769-1799,* Charpentier, Paris, 1880-1881, 3 Vols, Vol. I, pp. 93, 97.

[2] *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 70.

[3] *Ibid.,* Vol. I, pp. 72-73.

[4] Chuquet, Arthur, *La Jeunesse de Napoleon,* Paris: Armand Colin, 1897, 3 Vols, Vol. I, pp. 85-88, pp. 102-107, p. 204.

[5] Lung, *op. cit.,* Vol. I, p. 166.

[6] *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 110.

[7] *Ibid.,* Vol. I, p. 125.

[8] Asprey, Robert, *The Rise and Fall of Napoleon Bonaparte,* Abacus, 2000, Vol. I, p. 22.

[9] Madelin, Louis, *Histoire du Consulat,* Hachette, Paris, 1937-1954, 16 Vols, Vol. I, *La Jeunesse,* p. 319.

[10] Masson, Frederic, *Napoleon and the Fair Sex,* Heinemann, London, 1894, p. 56.

[11] Colin, Jean, *L'Education Militaire de Napoleon,* R. Chapelot, Paris, 1900, p. 349.

[12] Thiry, J., *Napoleon in Italy,* Berger-Levrault, Paris, 1973, p. 136.

[13] Holland, Rose, J., 'The Dispatches of Colonel Thomas Graham on the Italian Campaign of 1796-1797', *The English Historical Review,* No. 53, Vol. XIV, January 1899, I, p. 96-97.

[14] Asprey, *op. cit.,* p. 147.

[15] Napoleon *Lettres* (Tullard), 78-80, Milan, 11 June 1796.

[16] Thiry, *op. cit.,* Italy, p. 202.

[17] Asprey, *op. cit.,* p. 218.

[18] Russell Chamberlin, Loot, The Heritage of Plunder, Thames and Hudson, 1983, p. 137.

[19] *Ibid., p. 138.*

[20] *Ibid.,* p. 142.

[21] Ibid., p. 140.

[22] Ibid., p. 140.

[23] McClellan, Andrew, *Inventing the Louvre, Art Politics and the Origin of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth Century Paris,* University of California Press, 1999, p. 123.

[24] *Ibid.,* p. 123.

[25] *Ibid.,* p. 123.

[26] *Ibid.,* p. 123.

[27] *Ibid.,* p. 123.

[28] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 140.

[29] *Ibid.,* p. 141.

[30] *Ibid.,* p. 221.

[31] Asprey, *op. cit.,* p. 231.

[32] *Ibid.,* p. 264.

[33] *Ibid.,* p. 302.

[34] *Ibid.,* p. 303.

[35] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 136.

[36] *Ibid.,* p. 50.

[37] Asprey, *op. cit.,* p. 301.

[38] Rose, J., *The Life of Napoleon,* George Bell, London, 1903, 2 Vols, Vol. 1, p. 479.

[39] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 142.

[40] *Ibid.,* p. 143.

[41] Miles, Margaret M., *Art as Plunder,* Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 339.

[42] *Ibid.,* p. 347.

[43] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 144.

[44] *Ibid.,* p. 145.

[45] *Ibid.,* p. 146.

[46] *Ibid.,* p. 144.

9 - Greece and Lord Elgin

The Parthenon today.

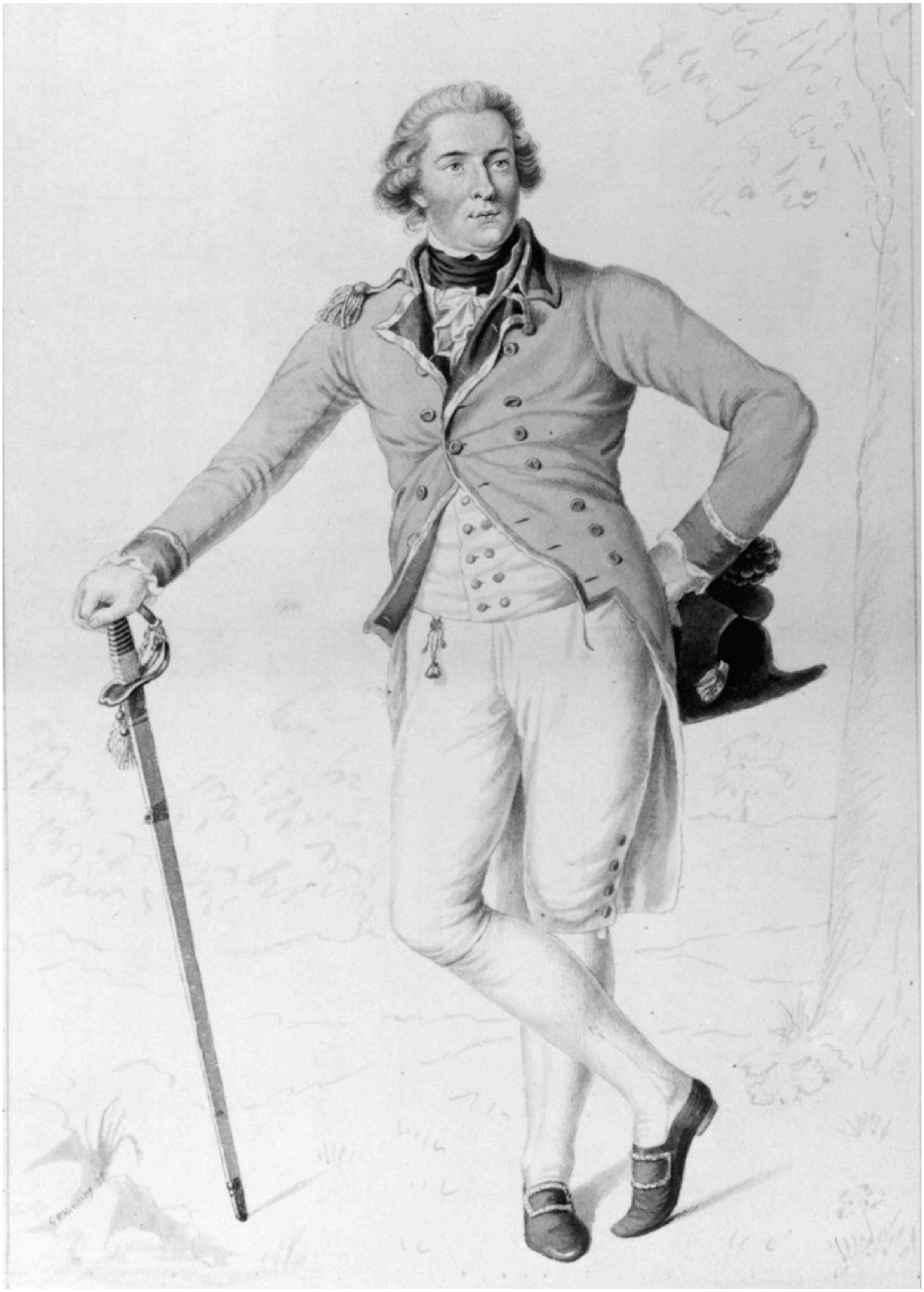
Dull is the eye that will not weep to see
Thy walls defaced, thy mouldering shrines removed
By British hands, which it had best behoved
To guard those relics ne’er to be restored.
Curst be the hour when from their isle they roved,
And once again thy hapless bosom gored,
And snatch’d thy shrinking gods to northern climes abhorred!

Lord Byron, *Childe Harold*

In March 1799, whilst Napoleon was struggling at the siege of Acre, a young Scot was getting married shortly before sailing to Constantinople, where he was to be British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Thomas Bruce (1766-1841), 7th Earl of Elgin, 11th Earl of Kincardine, was head of the ancient Bruce family that had been raised to the peerage of Scotland in 1633.

Elgin had promised his recent bride, the heiress Mary Nisbet, a new house and he employed a rising young architect, Thomas Harrison, to build Broomhall near Dunfermline in Scotland, which remains the family seat to this day. Harrison had been sent to Rome in 1769 by Sir Lawrence Dundas where he had developed an enthusiasm for antiquities. He suggested a classical style for Broomhall and, when news of the Constantinople posting arrived, told Elgin it was an opportunity to, ‘transport Greece to Scotland.’[1] Antiquities were in fashion encouraged by groups such as the Society for Dilettanti.

Elgin left in the summer of 1799 with his wife and a young secretary called William Richard Hamilton who was later instrumental in securing the Rosetta Stone for England. Elgin’s diplomatic brief was to extend British influence in the region and fuel the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the French. He also intended to collect antiquities and make drawings and casts. A team of artists and craftsmen assisted him. In Naples he employed the painter, Giovanni Lusieri, a fine draughtsman with a feel for topography and landscape.



***Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin*, from a painting by Anton Graf (1787) engraved by George Perfect Harding.**

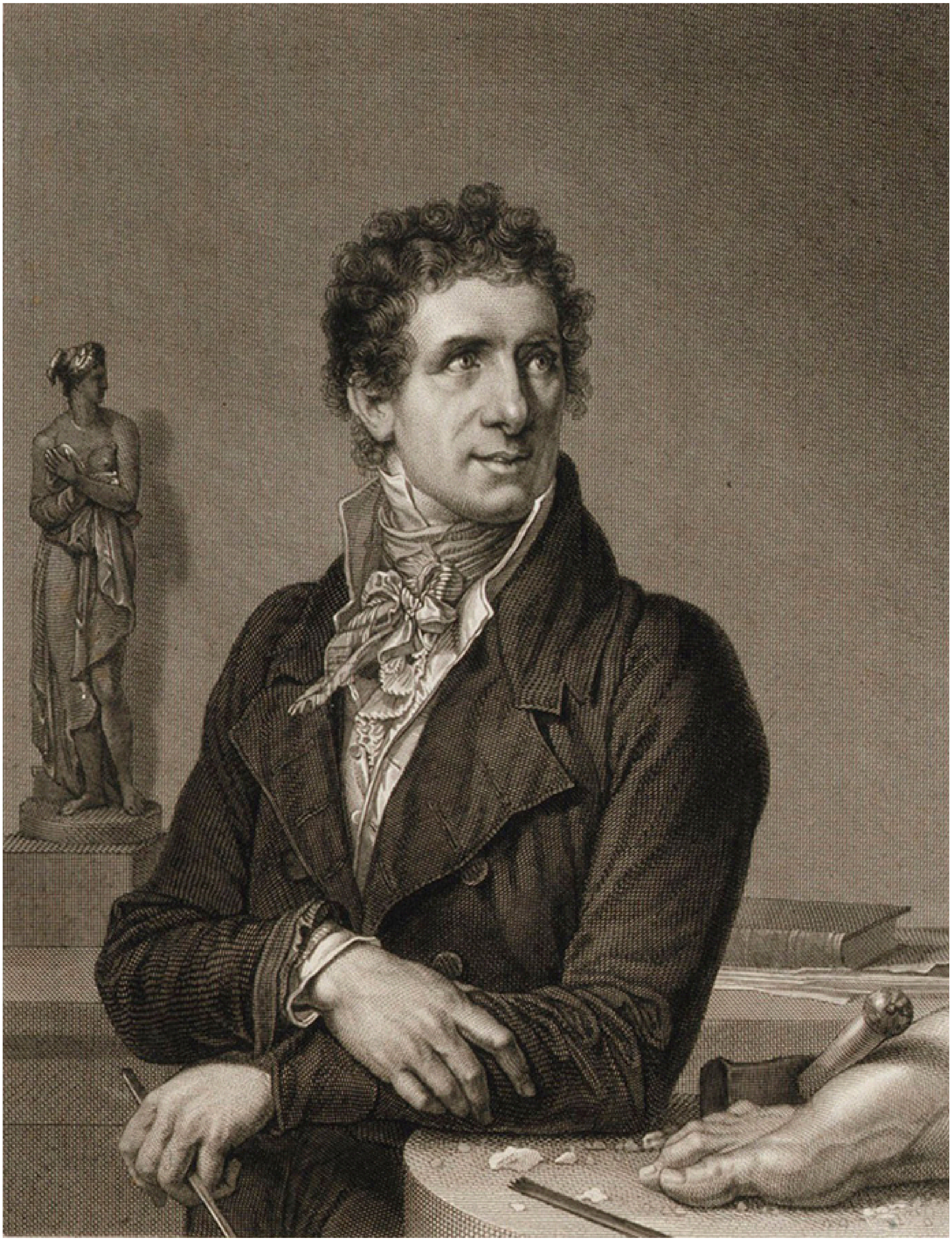
Elgin and his wife moved on to Constantinople leaving Hamilton and Lusieri to assemble the team, who were to proceed to Athens and start measuring ancient monuments. There was no mention yet of removing sculptures.

Greece had been under the control of the Ottoman Turks since the fifteenth century. The Greek state itself would not come into existence until the end of the Greek War of Independence (1821-1833). The Parthenon had received considerable damage before Elgin arrived and nor was he the first to remove marbles. It had served as a Greek Orthodox church and later a Latin cathedral from 600-1458 and was considered the fourth most important site of pilgrimage after Constantinople, Ephesus and Thessalonica. Latin inscriptions were carved into the walls and pieces of statuary deemed particularly pagan were smashed or removed.

Venetian artillery had shelled the Parthenon in 1687, when it was an ammunition dump for the Turks, which destroyed the marble roof and many of the columns, metopes and friezes. The Venetian forces were commanded by the fighting Doge, Francesco Morosini (1619-1694). A Swedish attaché later wrote, ‘How it dismayed His Excellency to destroy the beautiful temple which had existed for three thousand years!’ Morosini described it in his report to the Venetian government as a, ‘fortunate shot.’ Having wreaked destruction on the Parthenon, Morosini then looted some of the larger sculptures for Venice but his tackle snapped whilst attempting to lower an over-sized Poseidon and the horses from Athena’s chariot which smashed on impact.

Hamilton and his team arrived to find the Acropolis a squalid mess, with houses and hovels cannibalised from the ruins scattered amongst the buildings. Some of the marble was being burnt for its lime. Initially the Disdar, or ruler of the fortress, refused to give them access, partly because they found it strange that Christians would want these pagan images and partly because they saw an opportunity to make some money.

Hamilton eventually managed to arrange access for £5 per day, but there were numerous restrictions. The Disdar forbade them to sketch the higher sculptures because they might look down into domestic courtyards and see local women in states of undress. After a year’s work, they had only managed to draw the lesser works at ground level.



Antonio Canova (1757-1822). From an engraving by François Xavier Fabre after a portrait by Henry Worthington *c.* 1790.

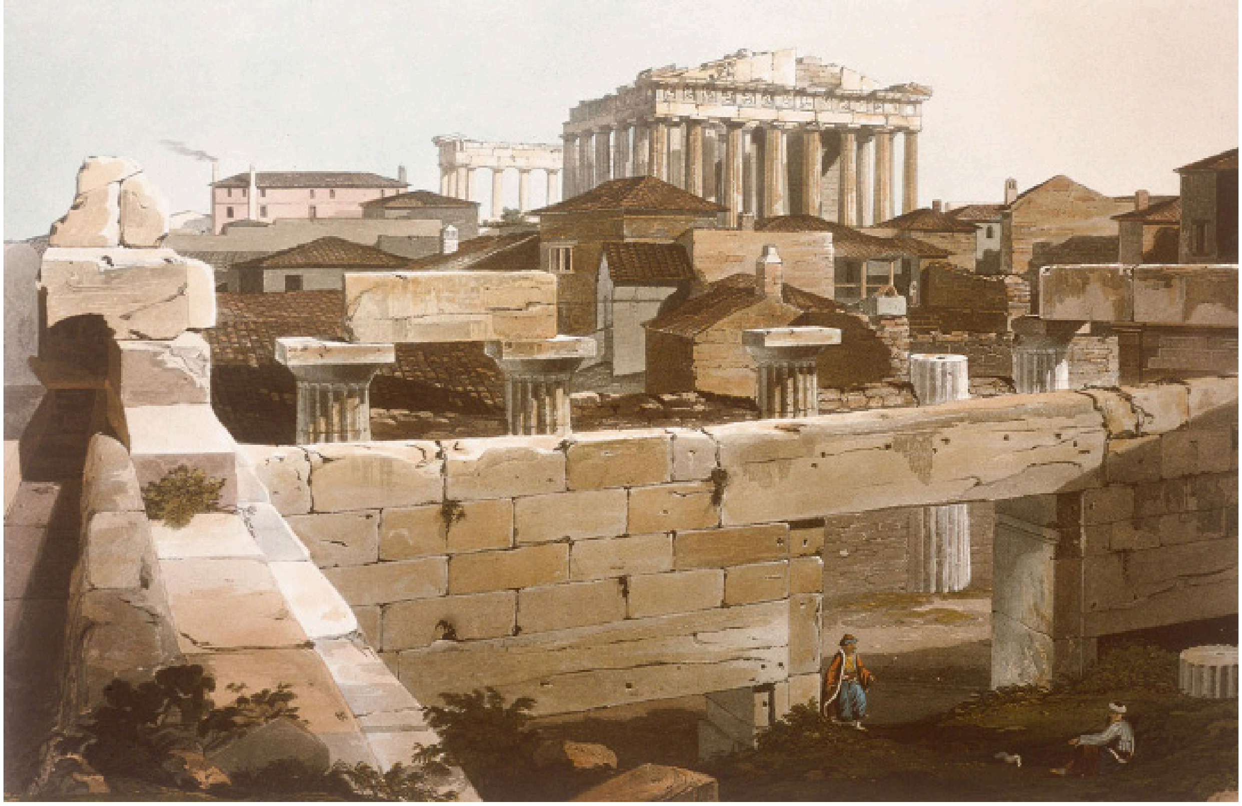
In 1799, Dr Philip Hunt, aged 27, arrived as Chaplain to Lord Elgin's embassy in Constantinople. He was a keen antiquary and visited Athens in 1801 to see how the project was developing. He was horrified by the state of the Acropolis and advised Elgin to remove the statues. He suggested that they request some British warships to carry the marbles and wrote to Elgin in July saying, 'It would be well, my Lord, to ask for all that is left, or else to do all that is possible to prevent their going on in this fashion.'[2]

Hunt could see that it would be difficult to get the Disdar to agree to this and he encouraged Elgin to go over his head in Constantinople and use his status as ambassador to obtain a firman (royal warrant) to remove the sculpture. He recommended that Elgin request, 'the liberty to take way any sculptures which do not interfere with the works or walls of the citadel.'[3] Hunt's letter arrived in Constantinople just after Admiral Nelson had won the battle of the Nile and British power was rising in the Eastern Mediterranean. The sultan was showering honours on Elgin and granted his request to remove some battered stones from the Turkish castle on the old Athenian Acropolis.

The firman contained some ambiguous wording which has been debated ever since. The original copy is lost and Elgin claimed in the subsequent parliamentary enquiry of 1816 that he had handed it over to an Ottoman official in Athens in 1801. The only copy is in Italian and the crucial clause reads, 'qualche pezzi di pietra con iscizione e figure,' and the controversy turns on the word 'qualche' which can be translated as 'some' or 'any.' Whether or not the firman gave Elgin's agents such sweeping permission, his agents interpreted it as such and immediately began dismantling the Parthenon Frieze.

This enormous undertaking occupied over 300 workmen for a year and was a feat of engineering that had already defeated the Venetian Morosini 100 years earlier. The marbles removed by Elgin's team included 17 figures from the east and west pediments (of the original 92), the metope panels illustrating struggles between centaurs and lapiths, and 247 ft (of the complete 542 ft) of the Parthenon Frieze. They also removed parts of other buildings, including the Temple of Athena Nike, the Treasury of Atreus and the Erechtheum.

Elgin cut several of the larger sculptures into pieces to move them, causing considerable damage. Although Elgin was only there for a brief visit in the spring of 1802, he urged his team to work quicker in case the French seized control of the region. Some English visitors to Athens at the time were appalled. Edward Dodwell, whilst visiting, wrote,' Everything relative to this catastrophe was conducted with an eager spirit of insensate outrage, and an ardor of insensate rapacity, in opposition not only to every feeling of taste but to every sentiment of justice and humanity.'[4]



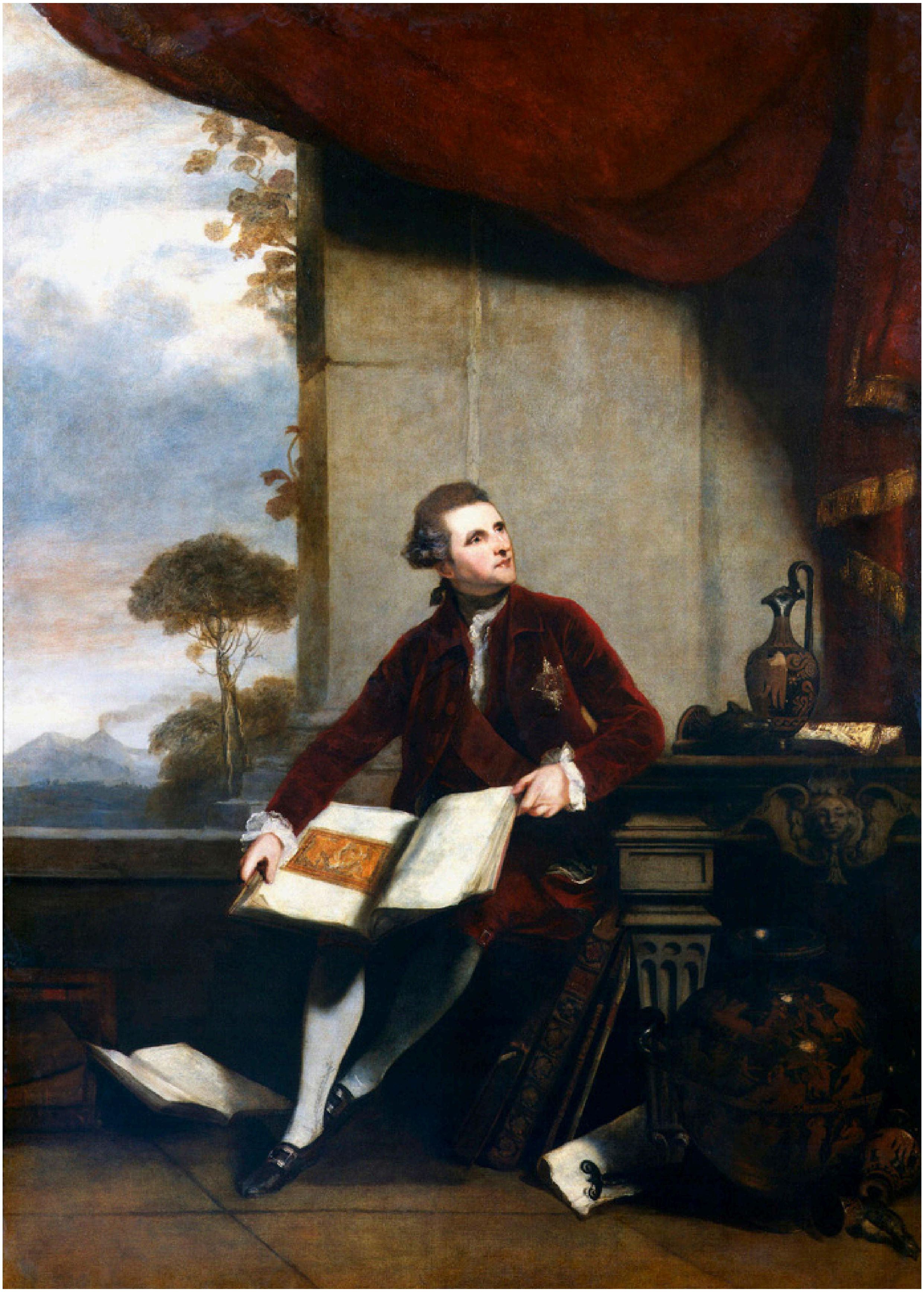
***A View from the Propylaea of the Parthenon* by Edward Dodwell (c.1777-1822).**

By 1803 the marbles were boxed in 200 chests awaiting shipment to Broomhall. Elgin requested and was granted HM warships for the transport. His costs so far were an enormous £28,000. Satisfied the treasure was safely packed, and with the ambassadorial post expired, Elgin headed back. Whilst en route, war broke out again and he was arrested and imprisoned in France.

Elgin had been suffering from syphilis and by this stage it had started to rot his nose. This made him less appealing to his wife and, while he was imprisoned, he sent her ahead with the diplomat Sir Frederick Wright-Bruce, with whom she unfortunately ran off.

When Elgin was released, he arrived back in Britain to heated criticism. The attacks were led by Richard Payne Knight, a leading member of the Society for Dilettanti. It may have been professional jealousy that this Scottish diplomat had secured ancient treasures beyond anything amassed by the society's members. At a dinner party where a hostess had foolishly brought the two men together, Knight shouted across the room in Elgin’s direction, ‘You have lost your labour, my lord. Your marbles are over-rated. They are not Greek: they are Roman of the time of Hadrian.’

There was a feeling among many that the rape and partial destruction of one of the most beautiful buildings in the world was too much. Lord Byron led the attacks, including the passage from his poem *Childe Harold* quoted at the beginning of this chapter. He carved into the rock of the Acropolis the lines, ‘Quod non fecerunt Gothi, fecerunt Scoti’ (what the Gods spared, the Scots destroyed).[5] The MP Sir John Newport protested, ‘The Honorable Lord has taken advantage of the most unjustifiable means and has committed the most flagrant pillages. It was, it seems, fatal that a representative of our country loots those objects that the Turks and other barbarians had considered sacred.’[6]



***Sir William Hamilton* (1730-1803), diplomat and archaeologist, by Sir Joshua Reynolds (1777).**

Elgin stored the marbles in a big shed on Park Lane where people could view them. Elgin had met Canova in Italy on his return trip and asked him to come and visit when in London. When Canova arrived, Elgin asked him to restore the marbles but the Italian sculptor, perhaps mindful of Michelangelo’s refusal to touch the *Laocoön*, declined, saying, ‘It would be sacrilege for me, or any man, to touch them with a chisel.’ Canova did, however, provide an expertise, and wrote, ‘Oh that I had to begin again, to unlearn all that I had learned. I now at last see what ought to form the real school of sculpture. I am persuaded that all artists and amateurs must gratefully acknowledge their high obligation to your Lordship for having brought these memorable and stupendous sculptures into our neighborhood.’[7]

Elgin’s expenses had rocketed. Dismantling had cost £33,000 and Giovanni Lusieri’s salary £12,000. Lusieri had disloyally taken Byron around the Acropolis, pointing out the damage caused by Elgin’s team. The building in Park Lane, with guards and transport, cost a further £6000. Elgin then added on the loss of interest on his capital of £23,240 arriving at a total of £74,240, a huge sum at that time.

With Broomhall no longer a priority after the loss of his wife, and his debts mounting, Elgin offered the marbles to the British Government for his cost price of £74,240. Apart from Knight’s incorrect accusation that the marbles were Roman copies after the Greek, there was general acceptance that the marbles were beautiful and objects of great importance. In 1810 Elgin wrote a defence of his actions and John Keats penned a famous sonnet:

On seeing the Elgin Marbles for the first time

by John Keats

My spirit is too weak; mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.
Yet ’tis a gentle luxury to weep,
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep
Fresh for the opening of the morning’s eye.
Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an indescribable feud;

So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old Time - with a billowy main,
A sun, a shadow of a magnitude.

The government held a parliamentary enquiry in 1816 to decide on their course of action and consider, ‘Whether it be expedient that the collection mentioned in the Earl of Elgin’s petition should be purchased on behalf of the public and, if so, what price it may be reasonable to allow for the same.’[8] The committee heard from experts that the statues were of the highest quality. Dr Hunt and William Hamilton attested that the site was in very poor order and they had removed the marbles to protect them.

After an 8-day hearing, the committee recommended they should be acquired for the nation and offered Elgin £35,000, under half of his cost. The government said it was their final offer and pointed out they had paid for the warships. Elgin grudgingly took it leaving a controversy still running 200 years later.

There were other similar stories unfolding at the same time all around Greece. In 1810, a young architect of 22 years, Charles Cockerell was bound for Constantinople, as Italy had been closed to Englishmen by Napoleon. Cockerell spent time in Constantinople with Byron and other expatriates sketching ruins and studying. In April 1811 he set sail for Aegina in the Saronic Islands with three other young adventurers.

View of The Parthenon today.

They planned to analyse and reconstruct the ruined Temple of Aphaea. They found the great honey-coloured temple overgrown with a barley crop, ‘but on the actual ruins and fallen fragments of the temple itself no great amount of vegetable earth had collected, so that without very much labor we were able to find and examine all the stones necessary for a complete architectural analysis and restoration.’[9]

As they started to excavate, they found a helmeted warrior in perfect condition, then a leg followed by more heads and torsos. They had found the fundamentally intact frieze of the temple, and the dig yielded 16 statues and numerous pieces. Cockerell noted that basic element of human nature that, ‘However much people may neglect their own possessions, as soon as they see them coveted by others they begin to value them.’[10] Cockerell and his partners bought the sculptures from the locals for £40 and sailed to Athens.

In Athens they rented a large house and started restoring the sculptures. The carving quality equalled that of the Parthenon marbles. News spread to Europe and offers of interest began to arrive. The four young men agreed to sell them en bloc. They decided to auction the marbles and sent notice to all the major English and Continental papers. Cockerell sent a message to his father to see if anyone in England would put in a bid.

Cockerell moved the marbles to Malta because he feared a French attack. The auction, however, was in Zante and it caused confusion among the possible buyers. Although the Prince Regent sent an English offer of £6000 and a warship to collect them, Ludwig I of Bavaria secured them for the same price at the auction. He built the Glyptothek in Munich to house his antiquities collection and the marbles remain one of its centrepieces today.

Cockerell and his three friends repeated this success by discovering the Phigaleian marbles at Bassae, a 100-foot-long frieze that shows in high relief battles between the Lapithae (a legendary people from Thessaly), the Centaurs, Amazons and Greeks. This time Cockerell ensured the marbles entered the British Museum in 1814.

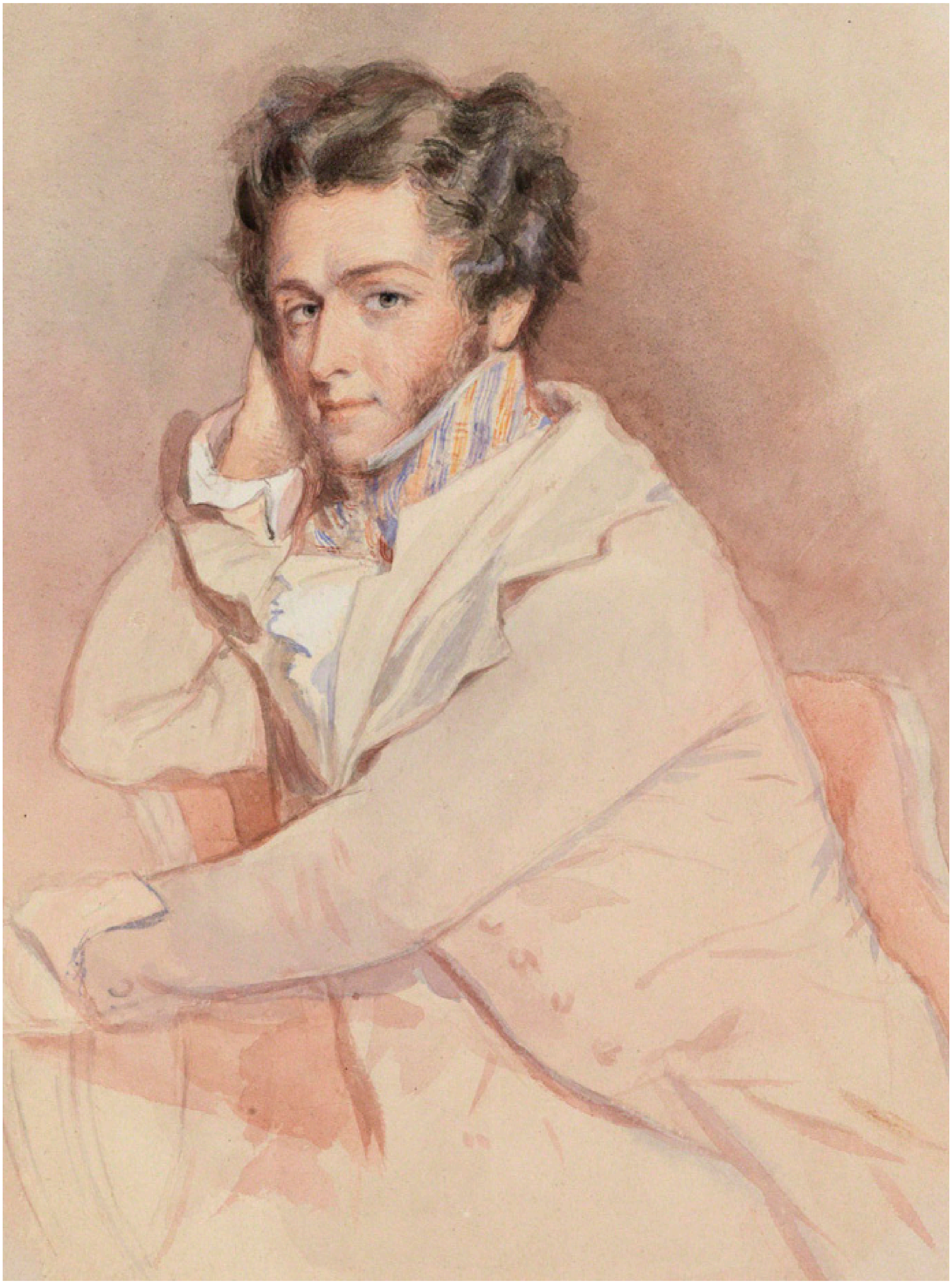
Elgin and Cockerell's actions have been questioned by Greece ever since. In 1832, shortly after their freedom from the Turks, the Greeks began restoration of the Acropolis. In 1886 they discovered nine perfect Korai buried by the Athenians themselves prior to a Persian invasion in 480 BC. In 1924, on the centenary of Byron's death, the diplomat Harold Nicolson made a personal appeal to the then Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald for the marbles' return.

One of the Elgin marbles in the Britsh Museum. Reclining Dionysos, from Parthenon east pediment (*c.* 447-433 BC).

MacDonald refused, saying that such a return would set an unwelcome precedent. Both sides of the debate have put forward strong cases. Professor David Rudenstine of the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law concluded that the premise that Elgin had obtained legal title to the marbles which he then transferred to the British government, ‘is certainly not established and may well be false.’[11] On the other hand, Professor John Merryman, Sweitzer Professor of Law and Professor of Art at Stanford University, argues that since the Ottomans had controlled Athens since 1460 their claims to the artefacts were legal and recognisable. He continues that written permission was granted with the firman, and that Elgin sought and was granted further permission to export the marbles by sea, and these permissions legalise his (and by default the British Museum’s) claims on the marbles.

Since 1975 the Greeks have been restoring the complex and have now constructed a museum on the site. Greece’s aim is that the marbles should be restored to Athens on moral and artistic grounds, although it is no longer feasible to place them back on the Parthenon and they should go into the museum. Greece points out that these sculptures are Greek and the Turks had no right to sell them in the first place. Appeals tend to proceed along the lines of:

The request for the restitution of the Parthenon Marbles is not made by the Greek government in the name of the Greek nation or of Greek history. It is made in the name of the cultural heritage of the world and with the voice of the mutilated monument itself that cries out for its marbles to be returned. Evangelos Venizelos, Greek Minister of Culture.



Charles Robert Cockerell **(1788-1863). Drawing by Alfred Edward Chalon (1780-1860).**

Melina Mercouri, the former singer and Greek Minister of Culture declared she was going to fight for the return of the marbles every day of her life ... including Sundays. She gave an impassioned speech at the Oxford Union in 1986 that concluded with:

> You must understand what the Parthenon Marbles mean to us. They are our pride. They are our sacrifices. They are our noblest symbol of excellence. They are a tribute to the democratic philosophy. They are our aspirations and our *name*. They are the essence of Greekness. We are ready to say that we rule the entire Elgin enterprise as irrelevant to the present. We say to the British government: you have kept those sculptures for almost two centuries. You have cared for them as well as you could, for which we thank you. But now in the name of fairness and morality, please give them back. I sincerely believe that such a gesture from Great Britain would ever honour your name."

Over the years the British Museum tends to use a defence along the lines of:

- The marbles are presented in a location midway between the USA and Europe where they can be studied in surroundings that offer a wealth of similar culture.
- Agreeing to restitution would start an avalanche that would empty most museums.
- They have saved the marbles from destruction by warfare (The Ottomans and Greeks besieged the Acropolis twice in the War of Independence) and Athenian pollution.
- As half the original marbles are lost the return of the marbles would not complete the collection
- They would be going from one large museum to a small one.
- They bought the marbles in a clear legal transaction debated at parliamentary level.
- Their legal charter forbids the return of any part of its collection.

The marbles initially resided in the Elgin salon of 1832 but are today housed in the Duveen Gallery completed in 1939. Whether looted or legal, a walk through the chilly splendour of the Duveen Gallery convinces most people they are in the presence of one of the highpoints of man’s cultural achievement.

Perhaps the last word should go to a neutral third party. Adolf Michaelis, the late nineteenth-century German classical scholar, criticised the brutal way Elgin cut the monument to pieces, suspected Elgin had abused his position and acknowledged the terms of the firman were ambiguous. However, noting the indifference of the Greeks and the active hostility of the Muslim Turks towards sculpture, he concluded, ‘Only blind passion could doubt that Lord Elgin’s was an act of preservation.’[12]

[1] Chamberlin, Russell, *Loot, the Heritage of Plunder,* Thames and Hudson, 1983, p. 14.

[2] Hunt, Philip, *Letter to Lord Elgin* dated 31/7/1801 kept in the British Museum.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 16.

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 27.

[6] ‘Elgin Marbles, Everything on the Elgin Marbles’, http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/enwiki/116918

[7] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 27.

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 28.

[9] *Ibid.,* p. 32.

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 32.

[11] Rudestine, David, ‘The Legality of Elgin’s Taking’, *International Journal of Cultural Property,* Vol. 8, No. 1, 1999, p. 356-376.

[12] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 37.

10 - Egypt

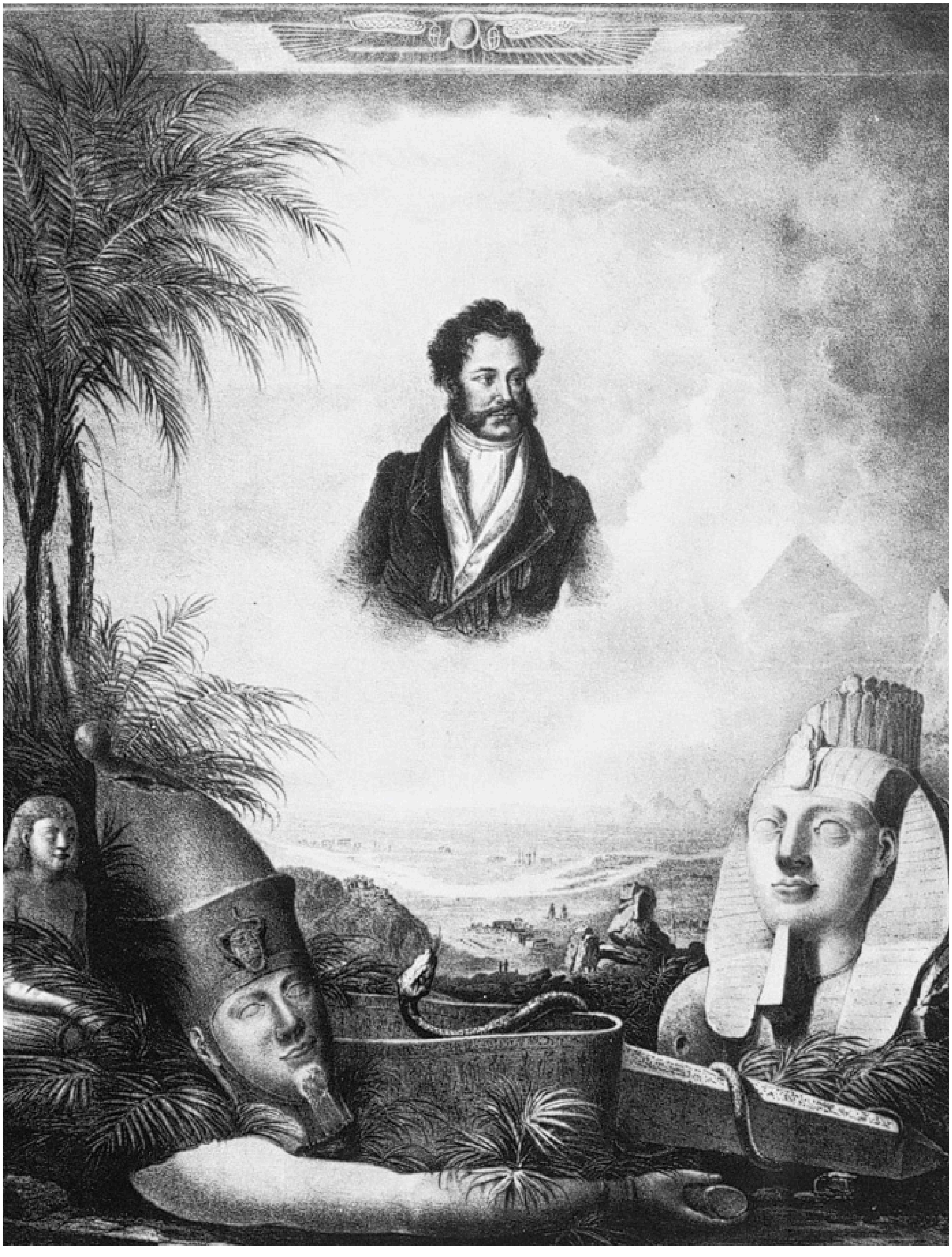
Detail: statue of *The Younger Memnon*. 19th Dynasty (*c.* 1250 BC).

> He handles masses of this kind (the 7.5 ton statue of Young Memnon) with as much facility as others handle pebbles, and the Egyptians who see him as a giant in figure, for he is over six feet and a half tall, believe him to be a sorcerer.
>
> - Johann Ludwig Burckhardt describing Giovanni Belzoni.[1]

Napoleon’s retreat from Egypt in 1799 instigated a free-for-all for Egyptian artefacts. Although Napoleon defeated the Turkish forces at the battle of the Pyramids in 1798, the Turks continually harried him and his army. However, despite his brilliance as a general, Napoleon never understood naval issues and his inability to establish a permanent presence in Egypt was primarily due to the British Navy’s control over the Mediterranean, which made re-supply from France impossible.

Whilst in Egypt Napoleon improved the water supply, sewerage, farming and roads. He started the phenomenon of Egyptmania, which was to last a century. Napoleon’s Scientific Commission produced one of the great works of Egyptology between 1809 and 1813. The *Description de l’Egypte* was published in 24 volumes with superb illustrations and an authoritative text. This followed from Baron Denon’s *Voyages dans la basse et la haute Egypte*. Both books were best sellers in many languages.

The sheer quantity of Egyptian artefacts that arrived in the European and American museums in the nineteenth century is staggering. The ‘Rosetta Stone’ had arrived in London in February 1802, although it was translated only between 1814 and 1824. The majority of the Elgin marbles arrived in London in 1805, the French plunder from Napoleon’s expeditionary force reached Paris in 1801 and the frieze of the Temple of Aegina went to Munich in 1813. Museums acquired cabinets of papyri, colossal stone statues, rows of mummies and acres of figurines and objects.



Giovanni Batista Belzoni **(1778-1823) from a lithograph by Fabroni. Belzoni was an Italian showman, engineer and explorer of Egyptian antiquities. Examples of Belzoni's loot illustrated here include the sarcophagus of Seti I now in the John Soane Museum, and the Young Memnon, the colossal sculpted head of Rameses II now in the British**

Museum.

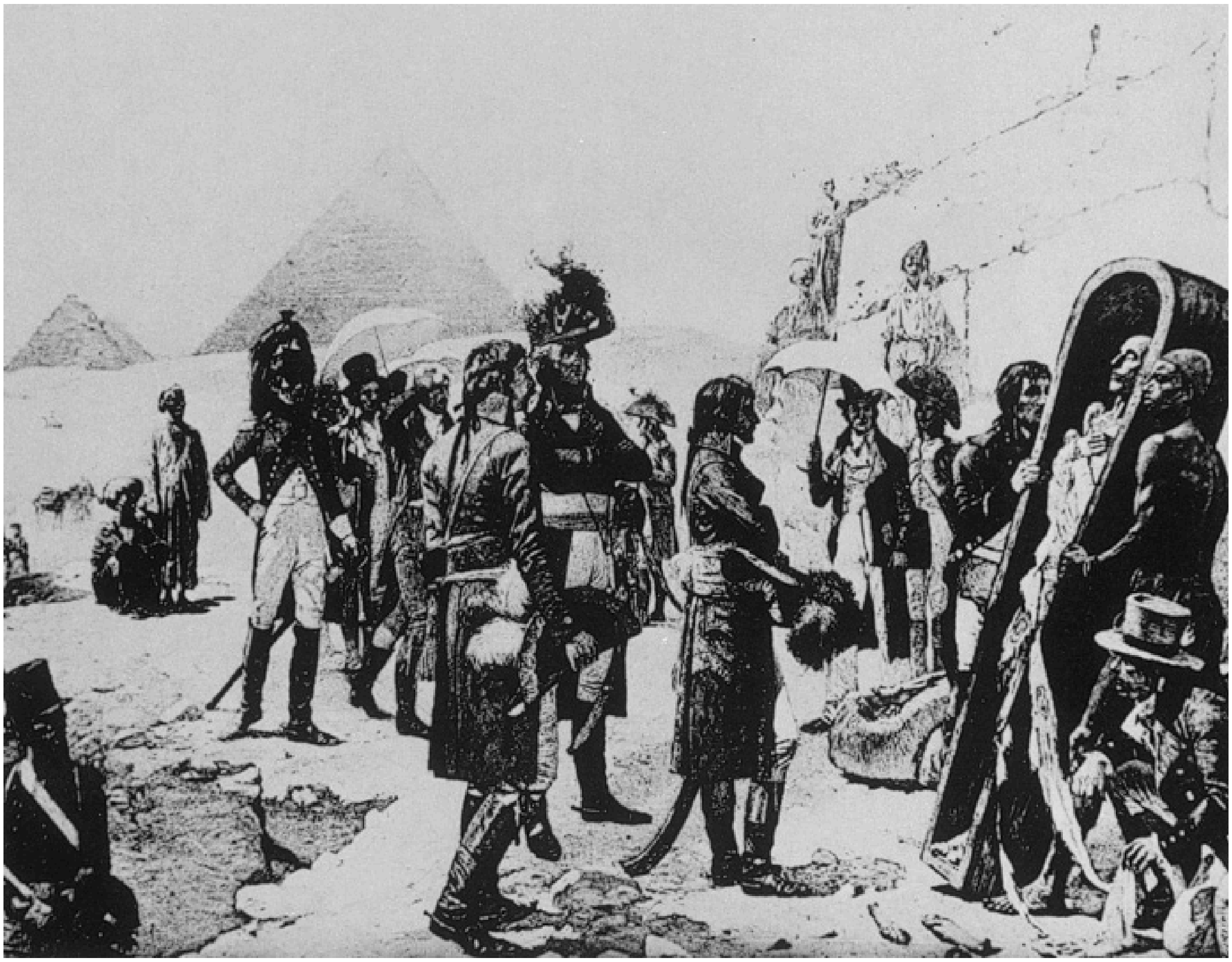
Howard Carter, discoverer of Tutankhamen in the 1920s was to reminisce wistfully about this period, ‘Those were the great days of collecting. Anything, for which a fancy was taken, from a scarab to an obelisk, was just appropriated and if there was a difference of opinion with a brother excavator one laid for him with a gun.’[2]

The early trade in antiquities had no infrastructure and significant logistical problems. If the engineers of the French army had tried and failed to remove the colossal 7.25-ton statue of the *Young Memnon (Ramesses II)* from Thebes, then who could? There was one man who managed to move it to England and countless other statues of similar difficulty.

Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778-1823), sometimes known as the ‘Patagonian Sampson’ or the ‘Great Belzoni,’ was the son of a barber in Padua, one of 14 children. He went to Rome aged 16 where he claims to have studied hydraulic engineering. He also took religious studies with the aim of entering a monastic order. However, the arrival of Napoleonic troops in 1798 caused him to flee and he toured Europe living as a pedlar before arriving in the Netherlands in 1800.

In 1803, aged 25, he arrived in England and started to make a living as a strongman performing in theatres and at country shows. At Sadler’s Wells Theatre Belzoni developed an act where 20 people climbed onto a contraption which he proceeded to pick up and carry around the stage. His acts were as popular for his ability to entertain the crowd with his charm as for his huge strength. In 1804 he had a regular spot at Astley’s amphitheatre, London’s leading circus of the day. He married an English girl, Sarah Bane, who supported him in all his endeavours.

In 1812 they left England for Malta where they met an agent of Mohammed Ali, Pasha of Egypt, who encouraged them to go to Egypt. In 1815 Belzoni arrived in Egypt and tried to interest Mohammed Ali in a hydraulic device he had invented to help move water from the Nile for irrigation. Unfortunately his assistant broke his leg in the ensuing demonstration and Mohammed Ali declined to get involved. This left Belzoni broke in Cairo and without an income. Luckily this amiable man quickly made new friends that included the Swiss traveller Johann Burckhardt who called himself Sheik Ibrahim ibn Abdullah. Burckhardt spoke fluent Arabic and had travelled extensively around the region, including Jordan where he discovered Petra.



Napoleon examining a mummy after landing in Alexandria in July 1798.

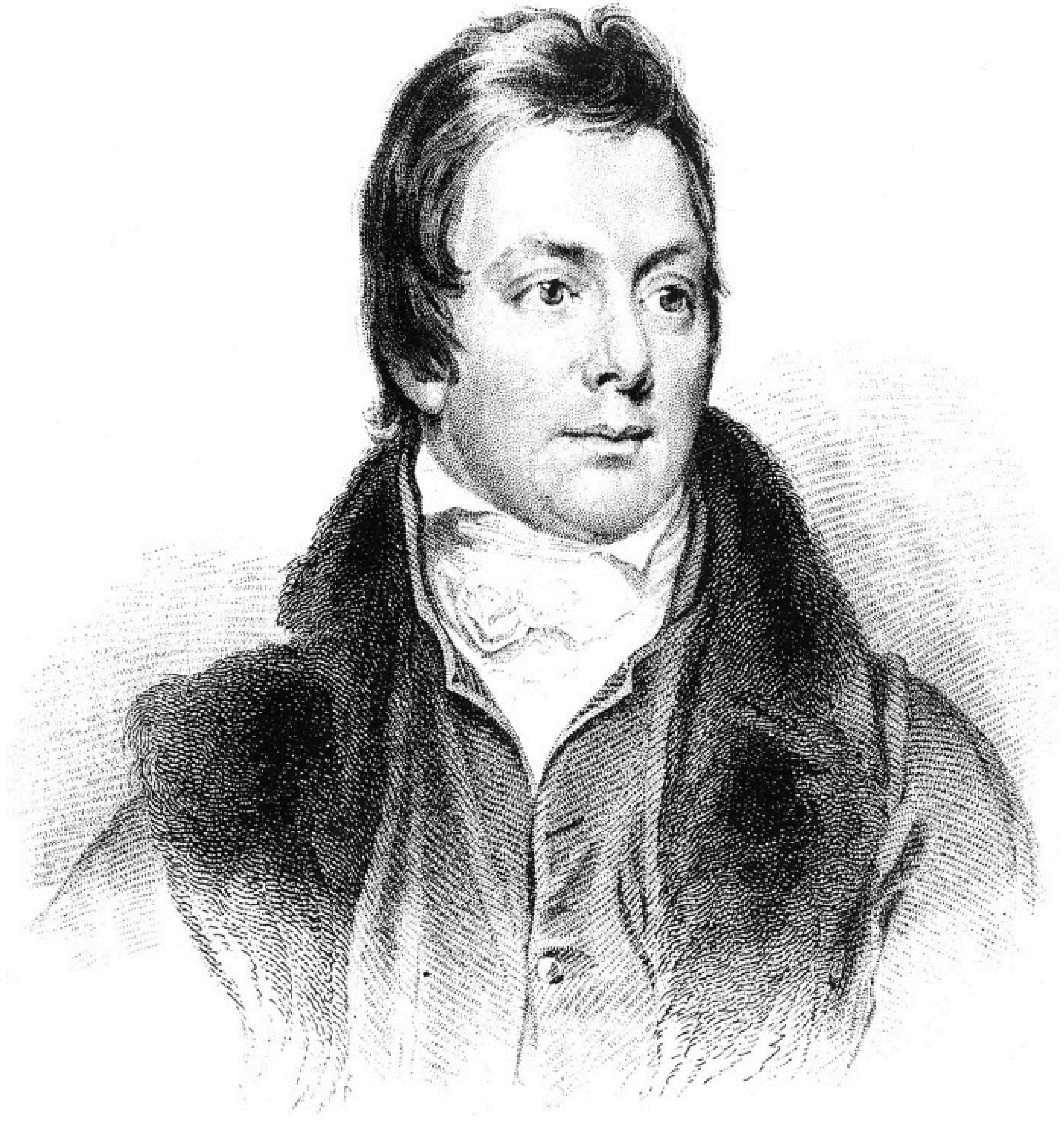
Burckhardt described the Upper Nile to Belzoni, including the great temple of Abu Simbel and information about the *Head of Ramesses II (Young Memnon)* that lay in the temple complex near Thebes. Burckhardt himself had considered trying to get the head back to England but couldn't think how. The new British Consul was Henry Salt, who also arrived in Cairo in 1815 and was a keen Egyptologist. Salt had been tasked by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (William Hamilton of Elgin marbles fame) to procure outstanding antiquities for England: 'Whatever the expense of the undertaking, it would be most cheerfully supported by an enlightened nation, eager to anticipate its rivals in the prosecution of the best interests of science and literature.'[3]

Belzoni offered to become Salt's agent to secure antiquities and Salt advanced him £25 to collect the *Young Memnon* and anything else. Belzoni's career as a plunderer was set and he reinvented himself as an archaeologist. As well as being strong, he was imaginative, curious and adept at solving problems. He also had an instinct for digging in the right place. Although he frequently used brute force smashing tomb doors with sledgehammers, he also had a sensitivity as seen in the exquisite watercolours which he later commissioned from J. Ricci for the book detailing his adventures in Egypt.

Belzoni left for Luxor where he duly found the statue where it had lain for centuries. Using only some planks, ropes and rollers he rigged up a series of pulleys to winch the statue onto a crude sled. It took 18 days and 130 men to tow the 7.5 ton statue to the river.

The labourers thought it impossible. After 150 yards the statue sank in the soft sand and they had to make a detour of 150 yards to find firmer ground. On 12th August they arrived at the river and built a causeway to drag it to where the water was deep enough to roll it on to a raft. To allow the heavy raft to cross the shallows in the Nile, they waited for the rainy season to raise the river level. The statue was shipped by Salt back to England and is now one of the most famous exhibits in the British Museum.

Belzoni continued removing sculptures in partnership with Salt, and his travels incorporated the temple at Abu Simbel, the temples at Edfu, Elephantine and Philae. Whilst excavating at Karnak, Belzoni opened up the sepulchre of Sethi I and was the first man to enter the second Pyramid of Giza and visit the oasis of Bahariya. He also discovered the ruins of Berenice on the Red Sea.



Henry Salt. **British Consul in Egypt, traveller and Egyptologist (1780-1827). Engraving by J.J. Halls.**

Belzoni had problems with the French, who were also plundering. Bernardino Drovetti (1776-1852) had been appointed French Consul to Egypt by Napoleon and he traded in antiquities for himself and for France. In 1824 he sold his personal collection of 5,268 pieces, including 100 statues, 170 papyri, stelae and mummies, to King Charles Felix of Sardinia and today it forms the basis of the Museo Egizio in Turin.

If Drovetti found 20 alabaster vases in a tomb, he would smash half of them to increase the value of the others. He broke off the pyramidion (top portion) of obelisks to make them easier to transport. Drovetti had plans for *Young Memnon* but Belzoni managed to remove it first.

Belzoni and Drovetti were polite with each other socially in Cairo but fought hard over the antiquities. Both men gave money to local chiefs throughout Egypt for information and for disrupting the plans of the other. Belzoni complained, 'I verily believe that if I had pointed out one of the sandbanks or the solid rock, they would have said they just intended to have broken into it the next day.'[4]

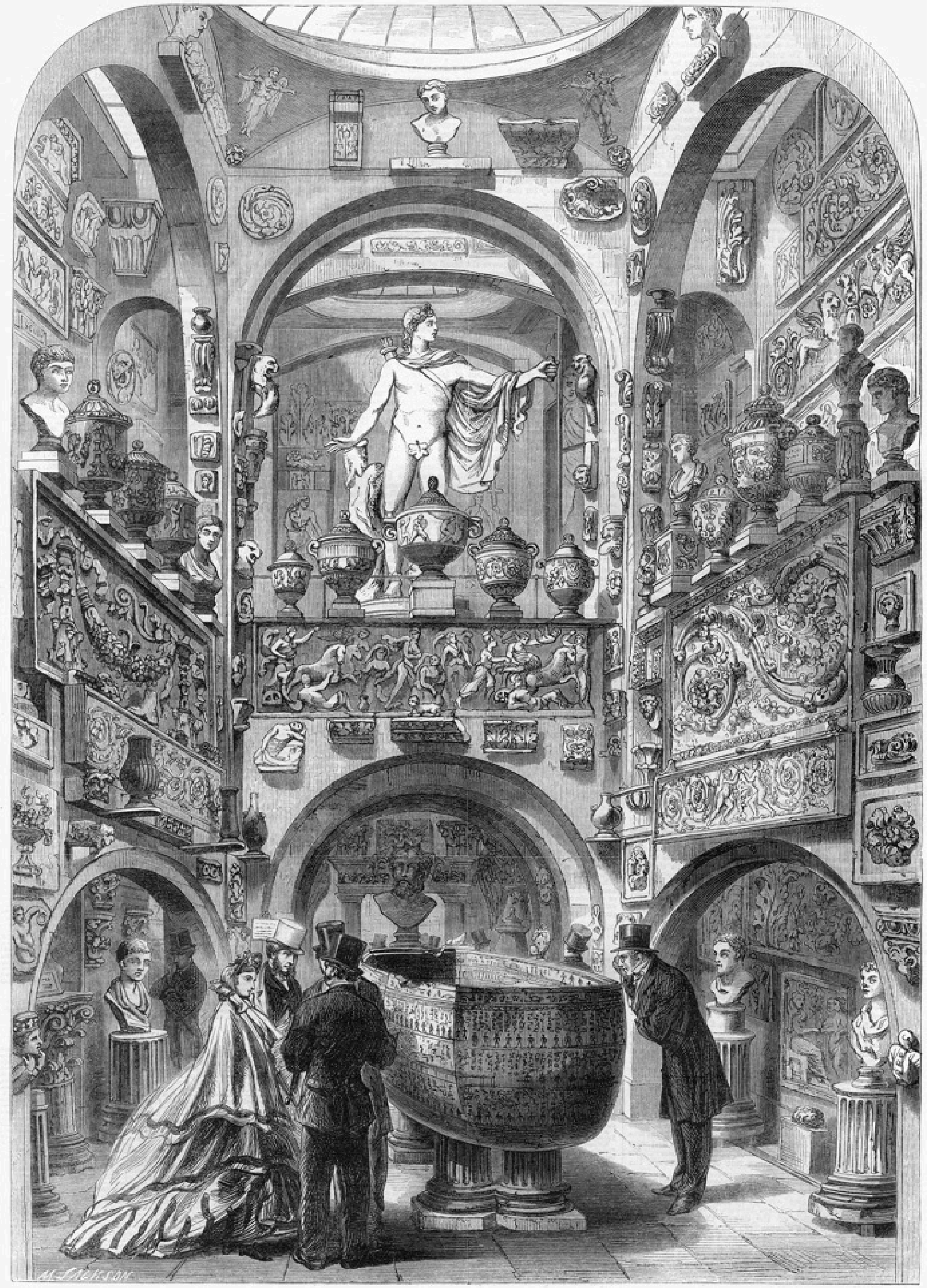
When Belzoni removed the obelisk from the island of Philae in the Nile, he was nearly killed by Drovetti's men. Belzoni relates, 'But alas, when the obelisk came gradually from the sloping bank and all its weight rested on it, the pier, with the obelisk and some of the men, took a slow movement, and majestically descended into the river.'[5] Belzoni managed to manoeuvre the 6-ton statue out of the mud and back into a boat.

When Drovetti heard Belzoni was approaching Aswan intending to see if he could pass the cataract he sent men to intercept him, saying the obelisk was his. Belzoni later said, 'I have no doubt if I had attempted to dismount [from his donkey] the cowards would have despatched me on the ground and said that they did it in defence of their lives as I had been the aggressor.'. Belzoni commented, 'I thought it high time to sell my life as dear as I could.'[6] At that moment Drovetti arrived and called his men off. The obelisk was shipped to England by Salt. It was acquired by the collector Ralph Banks, and it remains today in his garden at Kingston Lacy in Dorset in England.

The tomb of Sethi I yielded Belzoni the splendid sarcophagus that Salt later sold to the architect Sir John Soane for £2000 in 1824. Soane referred to it as, 'this marvellous effort of human industry and perseverance.' Belzoni describes this discovery and the amazing wall paintings and hieroglyphs as one of the highlights of his career:

> On the 16th October, 1817 I recommenced my excavations in the valley of Beban el Malook (the Valley of the Kings), and pointed out the fortunate spot, which has paid me for all the trouble I took in my researches. I may call this a fortunate day, one of the best perhaps of my life; I do not mean to say, that fortune has made me rich, for I do not consider all rich men fortunate; but she has given me that satisfaction,

that extreme pleasure, which wealth cannot purchase; the pleasure of discovering what has been long sought in vain, and of presenting the world with a new and perfect monument of Egyptian antiquity, which can be recorded as superior to any other in point of grandeur, style, and preservation, appearing as if just finished on the day we entered it; and what I found in it will show its great superiority to all others.[7]


M. JACKSON

Engraving showing the interior of the Sarcophagus Room of Sir John Soane's Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London (1864).

The sarcophagus remains in the Sir John Soane's house at 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields in London. Soane bequeathed the house to the nation in 1837. It is filled with antiquities covering every available surface. The house is worth a visit, not only to see its treasures, but also because it gives an insight into the obsession for Egyptology that gripped collectors and museums of that time. The sarcophagus sits on the floor supported on four columns and is covered in small detailed carvings and hieroglyphs. Its brooding presence overpowers all the other antiquities in the room, which are of a high quality themselves.

Belzoni appears to have known no fear. He often manoeuvred his considerable frame down tiny passages into the tombs. His team frequently thought that, like a terrier going down a foxhole, he would fail to reappear. Some of his own writings are macabre. He liked papyri, which were often contained in the clothing of the mummies. The mummies frequently disintegrated into dust when he was examining them deep underground. He commented on how this dust is, 'so fine that it enters the nose and mouth to such a degree that it requires a great power of the lungs to resist it.'

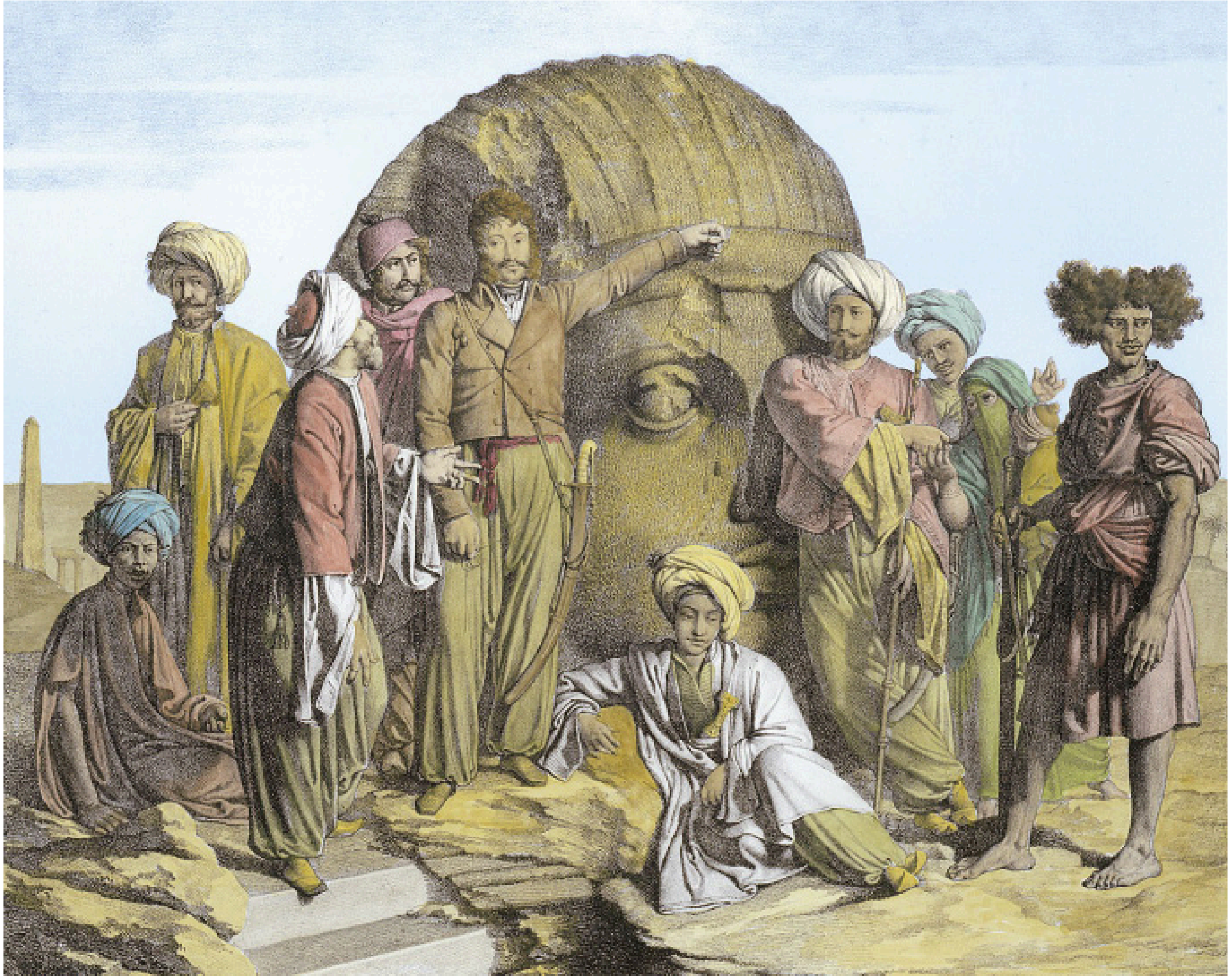
To find the papyri it was often necessary to break up the bodies and he found the mummy dust 'rather unpleasant to swallow.' He described how, exhausted, he sat down on a mummy, but it caved in under him, 'It crushed like a band box. I naturally had recourse to my hands to sustain my weight but they found no better support so that I sank altogether among the broken mummies with a crash of bones, rags and wooden cases which raised such a dust as kept me motionless for a quarter of an hour, waiting till it subsided again.'[8]

Statue of Rameses II, *The Younger Memnon*. 19th Dynasty, (*c.* 1250 BC). It was removed from the mortuary temple of Rameses at Thebes (the 'Rameseum') by Giovanni Belzoni in 1816.

Belzoni went into partnership with the Kurnese, a dynastic gang of tomb robbers who lived in the tombs at Kurneh across the river from Luxor. Behind Kurneh was a vast metropolis of tombs and burial caves housing thousands of mummified corpses. Belzoni paid the Kurnese to teach him how to find and remove the papyri and wrote, 'My purpose was to rob the Egyptians of their papyri, of which I found a few hidden in their breast, under their arms, in the space above the knees, or on the legs or covered by the numerous layers of cloth.'[9] The Kurnese literally lived in the tombs among the dead using the mummies as a resource: the dried bodies as fuel, their toys for their children and their clothing as bedding.

After several years of looting, Belzoni and his wife returned to England in 1819 where he organised exhibitions and wrote *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations in Egypt and Nubia* in 1820, which sold well and turned him into a celebrity. In 1820 he exhibited a facsimile of the tomb of Sethi I in London in the Egyptian Hall and in Paris. Ever the showman, he conducted the first public dissection of a mummy.

Belzoni and his wife were soon broke again, forcing him off on another expedition, this time to Africa. Intending to travel to Timbuktu in West Africa he passed along the Guinea coast when refused entry into Morocco. He reached the Kingdom of Benin, but contracted dysentery and died at a village called Gwato, where he was buried under a tree. The traveller Richard Francis Burton claimed Belzoni was robbed and murdered, but the truth is not known.



Bernardino Drovetti (1776-1852), who served with distinction in Napolean's army as aide de camp under General Murat. Later, he was appointed French consul general to Egypt in Alexandria (1807-1814, and (1820-1826). The illustration shows Drovetti and his followers using a plumb line to measure a colossal head in the Egyptian desert. From an engraving by G. Engelmann published in 1819.

His wife published his drawings of the royal tombs of Thebes in 1829, but without his flair and salesmanship it was not so successful and she died in poverty. Henry Salt, on the other hand, was very good at the money side of archaeology and split off from the service of the crown to deal on his own. Athough still in fierce competition with Drovetti, Salt acquired some outstanding antiquities. He sold the sarcophagus box of Ramesses III to the Louvre and sponsored excavations at Thebes and Abu Simbel. Salt sold his first collection to the British Museum for £2000. A second collection of 4014 objects was rejected by the British Museum, which claimed the price was too high, but Salt managed to sell it to Charles X of France for £10,000 and he placed it in the Louvre. Salt's final collection of 1083 objects was sold at auction, largely to the British Museum eight years after his death in Alexandria in 1827.

The plundering of Egypt continued through the nineteenth century as did the stream of archaeologists, adventurers and tourists arriving in Egypt. Egyptians started faking artefacts to sell to the gullible tourists and European museums are full of suspect items.

By the early nineteenth century the museums had taken over from private collectors with superior funding and government backing. Today there is a resistance towards the spending of taxpayers' money on art that didn't exist in nineteenth-century Europe.

The two collectors who dominated late eighteenth-century collecting of antiquities in England were Henry Blundell (1724-1810) of Ince Hall near Liverpool and Charles Townley (1737-1805). They were friends and often travelled together.

Blundell collected around 500 pieces of classical sculpture, his collection ranking with that of the British Museum at the time. His own account of his collection published in 1803 and 1810 is a valuable source of information regarding dealers, agents and restorers of the time. His collection today is spread between Ince Blundell Hall and the Liverpool museums.

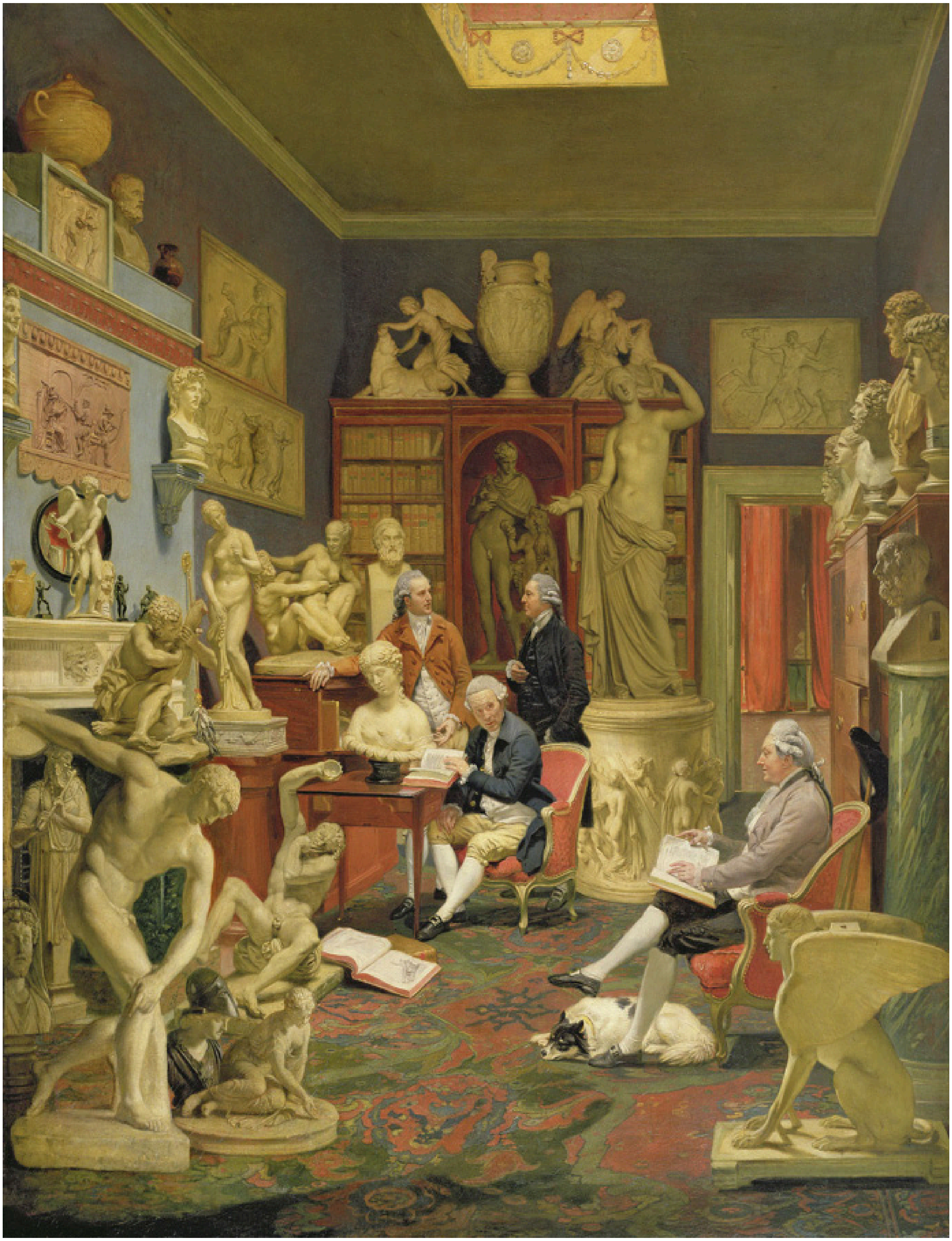
Charles Townley bought mainly from Thomas Jenkins, a dealer in Rome, and used the antiquarian Gavin Hamilton for advice. He lived at Townley Hall near Burnley in Lancashire and split his collection between there and his London town house at Park St where he is depicted in a famous painting of 1783 by Zoffany. After he died in 1805 the British Museum raised a grant of £20,000 from parliament, to buy the collection, and it remains the core of the Museum's Greco-Roman holdings.

As the museums collected during the nineteenth century they sent out trained archaeologists to replace the early adventurers. They developed the practice of 'partage' from the 1830s, whereby the excavations were given a semblance of legality by giving the host country 50% of the treasure discovered. In 1835, under the leading French scholar, Jean-Francois Champollion (1790-1832), the Egyptian government established an Antiquities Service to monitor the excavations and enforce a fair division of spoils. Partage remained the *opus operandi* of archaeologists until it became unfashionable in the mid twentieth century with the rise of cultural nationalism. Iraq made the practice illegal around 1970. The flow of antiquities into museums has since become a trickle and the market place increasingly expensive and litigious.

The Metropolitan in New York, the Louvre in Paris, the Glyptothek in Munich and the Berlin State museums are well known and house treasures that arrived at this time, such as Berlin's *Ishtar Gate of Babylon* and the *Pergamum marbles*. There are also countless smaller museums that have extensive holdings of antiquities such as The Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago, which houses 120,000 objects collected mainly by partage in the 1920s.

Most leading scholars of the period were involved in looting. Jean-Francois Champollion translated the hieroglyphics using the Rosetta Stone between 1822 and 1824 and his work *Precis du systeme hieroglyphique* gave birth to modern Egyptology. By the age of 20 he had mastered, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Amharic, Sanskrit, Avestan, Pahlavi, Syriac, Coptic, Chaldaen, Persian, Ethiopic and Chinese. In 1827, with the Italian scholar Ippolito Rosellini, he organised the Franco-Tuscan Expedition, with the backing of the grand-duke of Tuscany, Leopold II and the King of France, Charles X to visit Egypt to test their decipherment.

They sailed up the Nile and later published *Monuments de L'Egypte et de la Nubie* (1845). Unfortunately, the expedition disintegrated into a looting extravaganza and they seriously damaged the tomb of Sethi I (known as KV17) in the Valley of the Kings. They ripped out wall sections with mirror image scenes, the two largest of which are today in the Louvre. Champollion died from exhaustion at the age of 41 on his return to Paris in 1832.



Charles Townley and his Friends in the Townley Gallery, **33 Park Street, Westminster. by Johann Zoffany (1733-1810).**

Sir Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge **(1857-1934), Orientalist; keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian antiquities at the British Museum, photograph by Bassano..**

The Egyptologist, Sir Ernest Alfred Thompson Wallis Budge (1857-1934), Keeper of Antiquities 1894-1924 at the British Museum, greatly added to the Museum’s holdings. Born into a modest Cornish family, Budge was fascinated by antiquity before the age of 10 and taught himself Assyrian. He spent all his spare time in the British Museum whilst working as a clerk at W. H. Smith. Some of the Museum’s patrons, including the former Prime Minister W. E. Gladstone, noticed his enthusiasm and Gladstone sponsored him to attend Cambridge where he studied Semitic languages, including Hebrew, Syriac, Ethiopic, Arabic and Assyrian. On graduation he entered the British Museum, eventually becoming the Keeper in 1894.

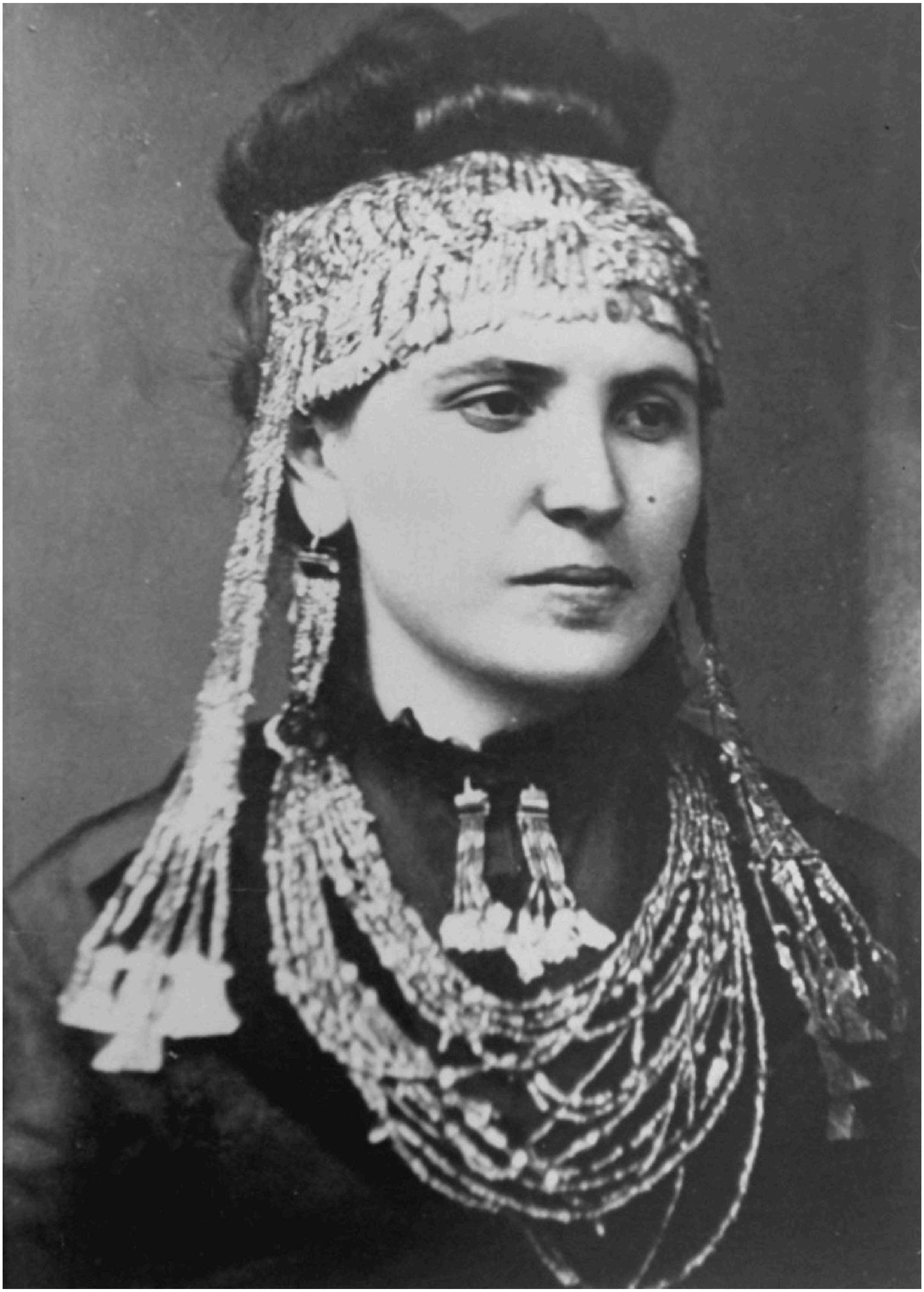
Budge was given the task of seeing whether cuneiform tablets could be acquired more cheaply at source, rather than at the inflated London prices. He developed a network of local Iraqi antiquity dealers and took over acquisitions. Budge made regular visits to Egypt and Iraq buying and trading enormous amounts of cuneiform tablets, Syriac, Coptic and Greek manuscripts and hieroglyphic papyri. His most famous acquisitions include a copy of Aristotle’s *Lost Constitution of Athens*, the *Tell al-Amarna* tablets and the beautiful Papyrus of Ani, which was described by Budge in the preface to his book on the papyrus as, ‘the largest, the most perfect, the best preserved, and the best illuminated of all papyri which dates from the second half of the XVIII dynasty [*c.* 1500-1400 BC].’

Budge was a popular after-dinner speaker and weekend guest and he published a serious and scholarly book every 2 or 3 years throughout his career. He always gave the excuse that, ‘Every unprejudiced person must admit that, once a mummy has passed into the care of the Trustees and is lodged in the British Museum, it has a far better chance of being preserved than it could possibly have in the tomb, royal or otherwise, in Egypt.[10] This rather patronising argument, seems to overlook the fact that these natives had produced the artefacts in the first place.

Similarly, Sir Frederick Kenyon, Director of the British Museum, at the time of the discovery of Tutankhamen in the 1920s said, ‘If a country owning ancient sites adopts a policy of rigid exclusion or refuses to permit ancient objects to leave the country, it means that the hunting over sites will be done largely by natives and art dealers.’[11]

Germany was also enriching its museums during this period. In Berlin, at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, the two great additions of the period were the *Ishtar Gate of Babylon* and the vast *Pergamum altar*, which today attract over 1 million visitors a year. The Pergamum altar is a massive stone podium about 100 ft long and 35 ft high. It dates from the second century BC and came from Pergamum (modern day Bergama) in north-western Anatolia.

The altar is on a par with the Elgin marbles. The frieze contains carved figures along its entire length. It was excavated by Carl Humann and brought back to Germany between 1879 and 1904. It was looted by the Soviet army after WWII, but the Russians, under Nikita Khrushchev in 1956, returned it to Germany.



Sophia Schliemann, wife of German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann who discovered the site of ancient Troy, bedecked with ornaments found in the excavation.

The *Ishtar Gate of Babylon* was the eighth gate of the inner wall of Nebuchadnezzar II's Babylon and was built around 575 BC. The gate is constructed of blue glazed tiles with alternating rows of dragons and aurochs. Along with the walls of Babylon, it was considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world until replaced by the Lighthouse of Alexandria in the eighth century. The gate was reconstructed with material removed from Babylon by Robert Koldeway between 1902 and 1914.

A leading German looter of this time was Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890), whose fame rests on his excavations of Troy, Mycenae and Tiryns, which back up the truth of Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Schliemann left school at 14 but studied classics voraciously in his spare time. He mastered 13 languages, including Russian, Greek, Arabic, Turkish, English and all the main European languages. This gift for languages was useful for business and Schliemann made a fortune in the gold fields of California, and by speculating on the stock market. He retired aged 40 and lived in Russia with his first wife to study ancient Troy. His marriage foundered and he married his second wife, Sophie Schliemann (née Engastromenos) after advertising for her in an Athenian newspaper.

In 1873 he discovered the fabulous *Priam's Gold*, which his wife later modelled for the press in a famous photograph where she wears headdresses, earrings and necklaces recovered from Hisarlik. Schliemann publicised his find too freely, causing the Turkish government to withdraw his licence,so he smuggled the gold out to Germany. His actions have meant that the ownership of the items has been a matter of international dispute ever since.

Schliemann salted his sites with fake artefacts to swell the amount of real treasure he found. At Hisarlik Schliemann utilised his fortune to conduct the biggest archaeological dig conducted to that date, which eventually unearthed the site that modern scholars believe was ancient Troy. However, when digging at both Troy and Mycenae it is odd that both the fabulous hauls of gold and silver objects were discovered in the last two weeks of the digs and his finds were greater than any found at the other 800 Mycenaean sites excavated in Greece. Also, an eye witness does not recall seeing the more spectacular items such as the *Mask of Agamemnon* that Schliemann later produced.

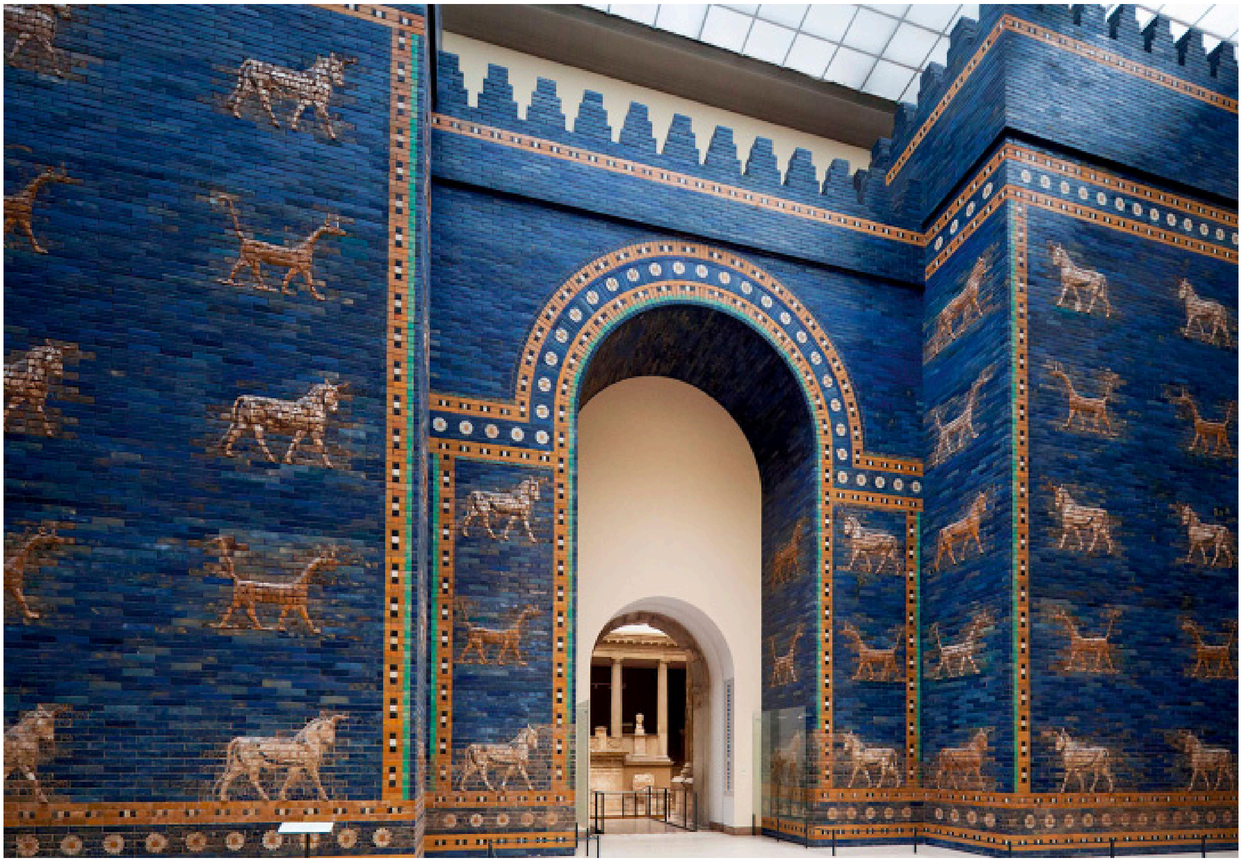
Pergamon Altar, *c.* 180 BC Pergamon Museum, Berlin.

The gold was looted by the Soviet army from Berlin at the end of WWII and is now in the Pushkin Museum in Moscow. For 40 years the Soviets denied having it until the late 1990s, when they finally allowed a few scholars access. Schliemann's only sure achievements were establishing the location of ancient Troy and proving at Mycenae that Greek civilisation was 1000 years earlier than previously thought.

German archaeologists were as devious and cunning as the English and French. A famous dispute that shows up the limitations of the practice of partage concerns Ludvig Borchardt and his discovery and appropriation of the beautiful limestone bust of *Queen Nefertiti*, wife of the heretical pharaoh Akhenaten. Ludwig Borchardt (1863-1938) was a German Egyptologist born in Berlin. After studying Architecture and Egyptology under Adolf Erman, he journeyed to Cairo and produced the catalogue of the collection of the Egyptian Museum. In 1907 he founded the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo and was its director until 1928. Whilst excavating at Amarna he discovered the workshop of the sculptor Djhutmose with the bust of *Nefertiti*.

Possibly the most famous artefact from ancient Egypt, the sculpture shows a beautiful young woman, swan necked with the symmetrical features of a contemporary supermodel and wearing a conical hat and necklace. She has a sharp jaw line, sensual mouth and hooded Asiatic eyes. Her name means, 'the beautiful or perfect one has arrived' and an inscription at Karnak refers to her as, 'Heiress, Great of Favours, Possessed of Charm, Exuding Happiness, Mistress of Sweetness, beloved one, soothing the king's heart in his house, soft-spoken in all, Mistress of Upper and Lower Egypt, Great King's Wife, whom he loves, Lady of the Two Lands, Nefertiti.' She may have reigned as pharaoh and she was often depicted on temple walls the same size as the king,

Borchardt found her whilst digging at Amarna in 1912. Borchardt claims that, following the established procedure of partage, he showed the results of the dig, which ran to, 'many chests full', to an official of the Antiquities Service in Tel el Amarna so that a fair and equitable split could be made.



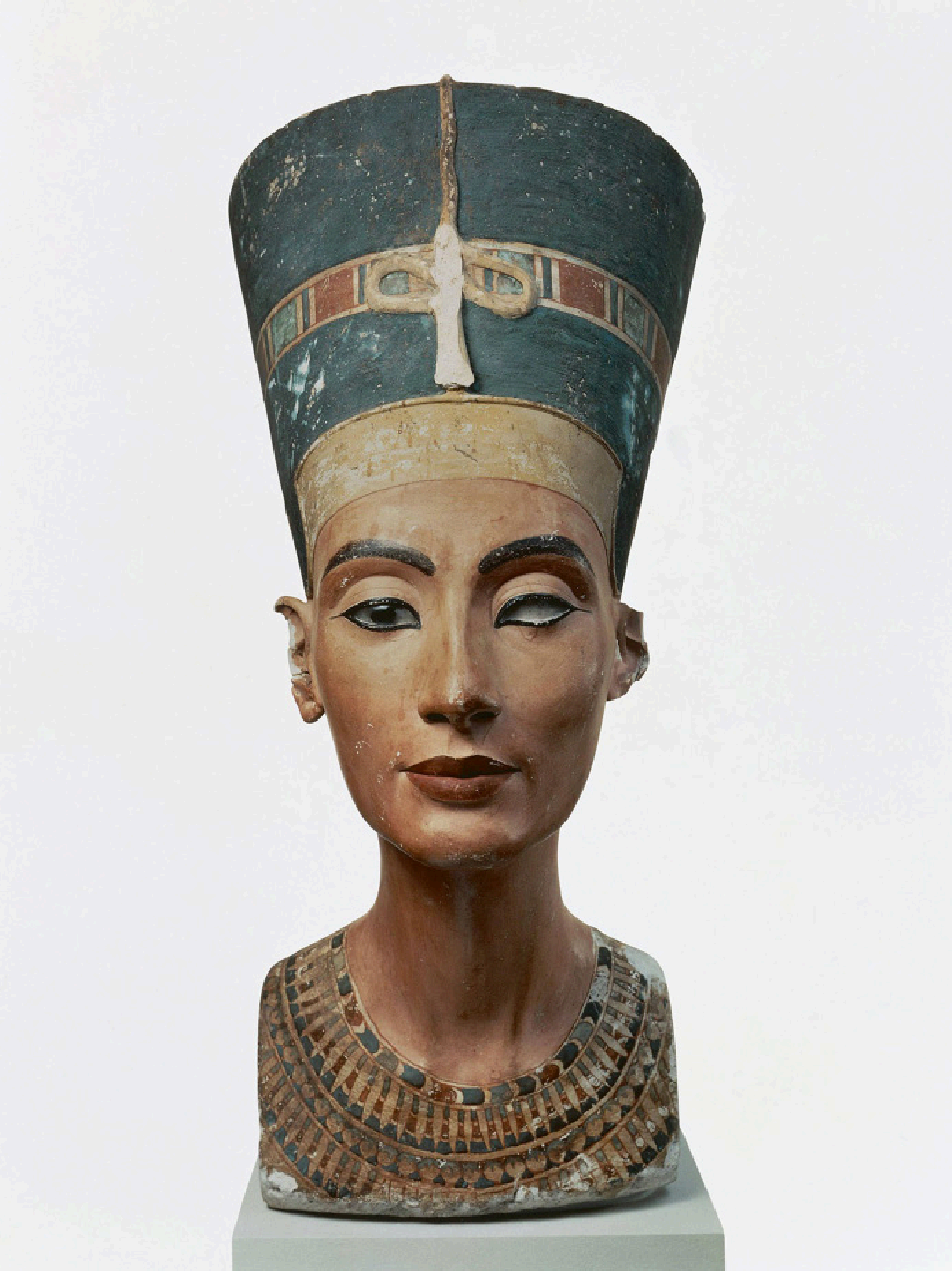
The Ishtar Gate was the eighth gate to the inner city of Babylon. It was constructed in about 575 BC by order of King Nebuchadnezzar II. Pergamon Museum, Berlin.

Egyptians query how an official could have allowed such an important object to leave in the archaeologist's share? There were other important statues of Nefertiti, including a limestone standing figure and another bust, that also stayed in Borchardt’s share and are now also in the Ägyptisches Museum in Berlin. Normally, the 50/50 division under the partage system was a moment of tense negotiation as both sides tried to claim the best pieces.

When *Nefertiti* went on exhibition in Berlin there was an explosion of anger in Cairo. The official, a Frenchman called Lefebvre, was rapidly tracked down. He was an expert on papyri and when asked why he’d given permission said he, ‘couldn’t remember.’ He said he had given blanket permission to an amount of boxes, but couldn’t recall seeing the bust of ‘Nefertiti.’ Collusion at least, and bribery at worst, could not be proven.

Demands by the Egyptian government for the return of the statue are ignored by Berlin. The statue features regularly in exhibitions, in Berlin tourist literature and, in 2006, was on billboards all over Berlin. The mysterious statue has become a part of the German national patrimony. In 1933, shortly after Hitler came to power, Egypt made an offer to exchange *Nefertiti* for another ancient sculpture. Although the Berlin Museum officials agreed, Hitler flatly refused, saying *Nefertiti* was one of his favourite statues and an important part of German heritage.

At the end of WWII *Nefertiti* was found by US soldiers hidden in the Merkers mine and moved to a 1920s art museum building in Wiesbaden, one of the US army Collection points. Josef Goebbels, Hitler’s infamous Minister for Propaganda, recorded in his diary on 8th April 1945, ‘Our entire gold reserves amounting to hundreds of tons and vast treasures, including the bust of *Nefertiti*, have fallen into American hands. The criminal derelictions of duty have allowed the German people’s most treasured possession to fall into enemy hands.’[12]



***Bust of Queen Nefertiti*, New Kingdom, Dynasty XVIII now in the Egyptian Museum in Berlin.**

Egypt then sued the Allies for the return of the 3000-year-old bust. However, the Allies were wary of returning looted art to other than its resting place before the war and they gave the bust back to Germany, where it was placed in the Prussian State Museum.

A fight then broke out between East and West Germany as to whom the statue belonged, causing the West German government to produce a pamphlet *Wem Gehört Nofrete?* (To whom does *Nefertiti* belong?). The pamphlet fails to even acknowledge the possibility of Egypt having a claim on the bust. In the 1970s the historian Philip Vandenberg tried to piece together the true story of what happened in Egypt and claimed that Borchardt's descendants did not co-operate. In 1978 The German newspaper Die Zeit launched its own investigation led by Gert van Paczensky.

Paczensky established that Borchardt knew the Egyptians would not want the bust to leave Egypt and either made sure that Lefebvre didn't see it or colluded with him. Borchardt sent a message to the Berlin Museum that a special consignment was on its way. The writer Russell Chamberlin, was told by an Iranian archaeologist that Borchardt made a plaster cast of *Nefertiti*, which he left at Amarna before smuggling the original out. In May 1918, the Berlin Museum Director Safer said, 'My colleagues and I were obliged to say that we had no space to display the bust. We were very embarrassed to have to give such a feeble reason.'[13]

Borchardt said in 1924, 'I hid our most precious find in Berlin as long as I could.'[14] He did publish the treasures found at Amarna, but with such vague descriptions and poor photographs they did not attract attention. The Egyptian authorities later asked Borchardt to admit to having made a mistake, but he declined. Borchardt was no longer given licences to dig and his career as a field archaeologist was over.

Gold Funeral mask of Agamemnon discovered at Mycenae in 1876 by Heinrich Schliemann.

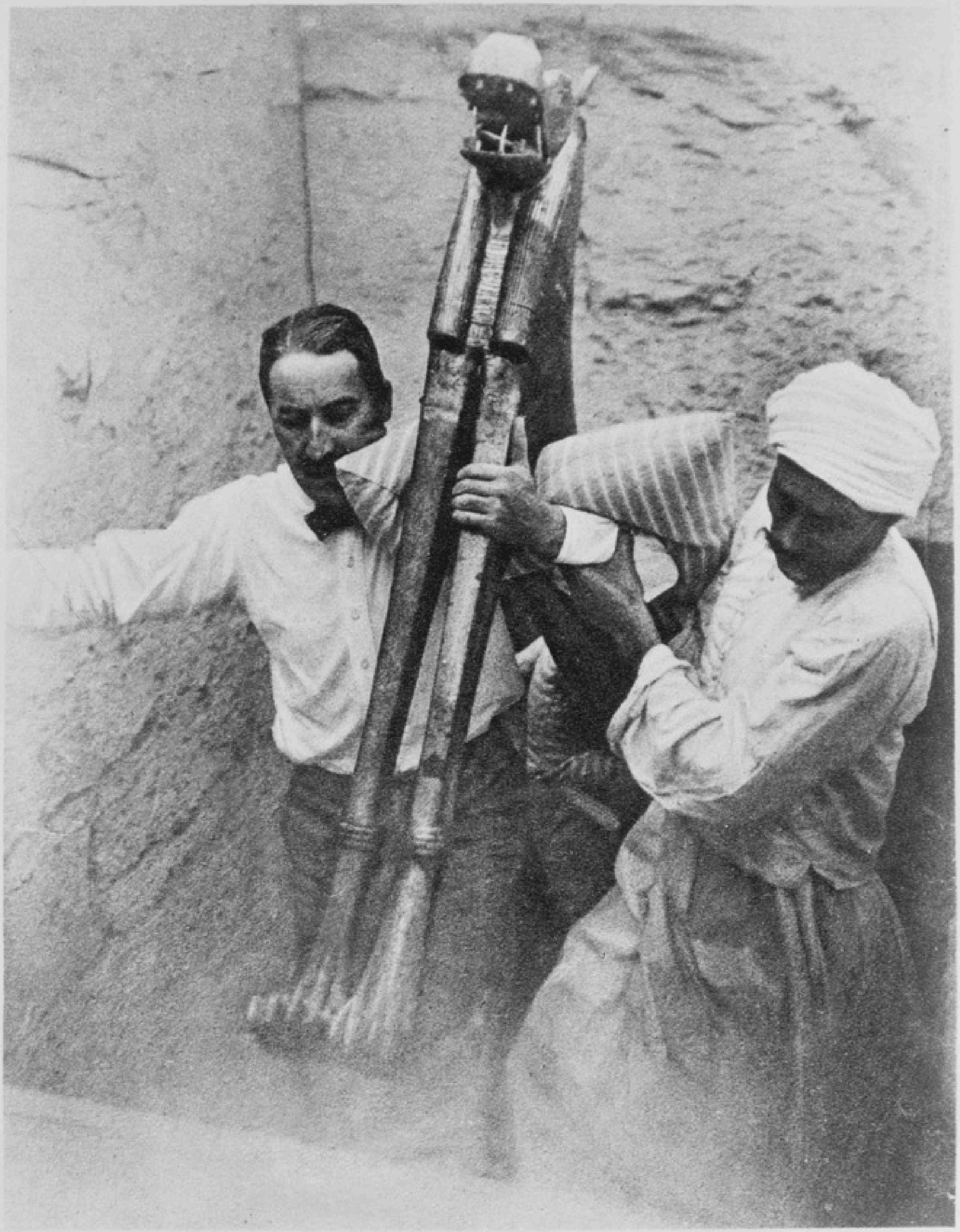
In 1945, when *Nefertiti* was being held at the US army collection point Bernard Taper, an art intelligence officer of the MFAA (Monuments, Fine Art and Archives program) found her locked in an office and said, ‘Just that office alone was worth the price of admission to WWII...I could not just brush past her, I had to stop and commune with her.’

There is something about the history of Nefertiti and her memorable face that continues to hold a grip over the Western imagination. Another theory that has emerged in recent years is that she is a fake made by Burchardt to stake his find and that would explain why Lefebvre had no recollection of seeing her. Either way Nefertiti's bust always gets discussed between Egypt and Germany and remains to Egyptians a powerful symbol of their exploitation by Western scholars.

By 1922 when the intact tomb of Tutankhamen was discovered, the Egyptian government had become much more protective over its heritage and managed to keep almost all of the major artefacts in Egypt. The tomb was discovered by Howard Carter (1874-1939), a tough and determined English archaeologist and Egyptologist who had begun studying inscriptions and paintings in Egypt as a 17-year-old. He excavated at Beni Hasan before working under archaeologist William Flinders Petrie, who taught a cautious approach to digging which Carter was to famously ignore at the tomb of Tutankhamen.

Carter discovered Queen Hatshepsut's tomb at Deir el-Bahri, and worked for the Egyptian Antiquities Service (EAS) until 1905. Photographs show a dapper man wearing a three-piece suit, watch chain, bow tie and trilby despite the Egyptian sun. He was introduced to Lord Carnarvon in 1907.

George Edward Stanhope Molyneux Herbert, 5th Earl of Carnarvon, was a rich man who owned racehorses and fast cars. After a serious motor accident in Germany in 1901 left him disabled, he moved to Cairo on the advice of his doctor. He became interested in Egyptology but realised he needed a professional if he was going to succeed and so when he met Carter it was a fortuitous meeting for both of them.



7. WITH IVORY TONGUE AND TEETH IN THE BOLDLY CARVED DOG'S HEAD: ONE SIDE OF THE TYPHONIC COUCH REMOVED BY MR. CARTER AND AN EGYPTIAN.

Howard Carter and an Egyptian assistant removing the typhonic couch from the Tomb of Tutankhamen in 1923.

Carnarvon agreed to finance Carter, extended his concession at Thebes and applied to work at Aswan, writing, ‘I thought I would have two strings as I am not sure I will get my wife to stay another whole two months at Luxor.’[15] Lady Carnarvon did become keen on Egyptology, and was recorded as digging out earth and rock with her bare hands. The two of them liked to sit in a large screened cage, to keep off the flies, watching the men work. Lady Carnarvon was, ‘dressed for a garden party rather than the desert, with charming patent-leather, high-heeled shoes and a good deal of jewellery flashing in the sunlight.’[16]

Carter and Carnarvon’s successful partnership lasted from 1907 until the Earl’s death in 1922. They excavated numerous sites such as Gurneh, Luxor and the lost temples of Queen Hatshepsut and Ramesses IV. Carnarvon formed the finest collection of antiquities of his generation. When Theodore Davis abandoned his excavation concession in the Valley of the Kings believing it to be exhausted, Carter and Carnarvon moved in. At Carter’s suggestion the pair managed to finance some of their costs by dealing in antiquities. With Carnarvon’s capital Carter bought antiquities from the Cairo markets and sold them to dealers and collectors.

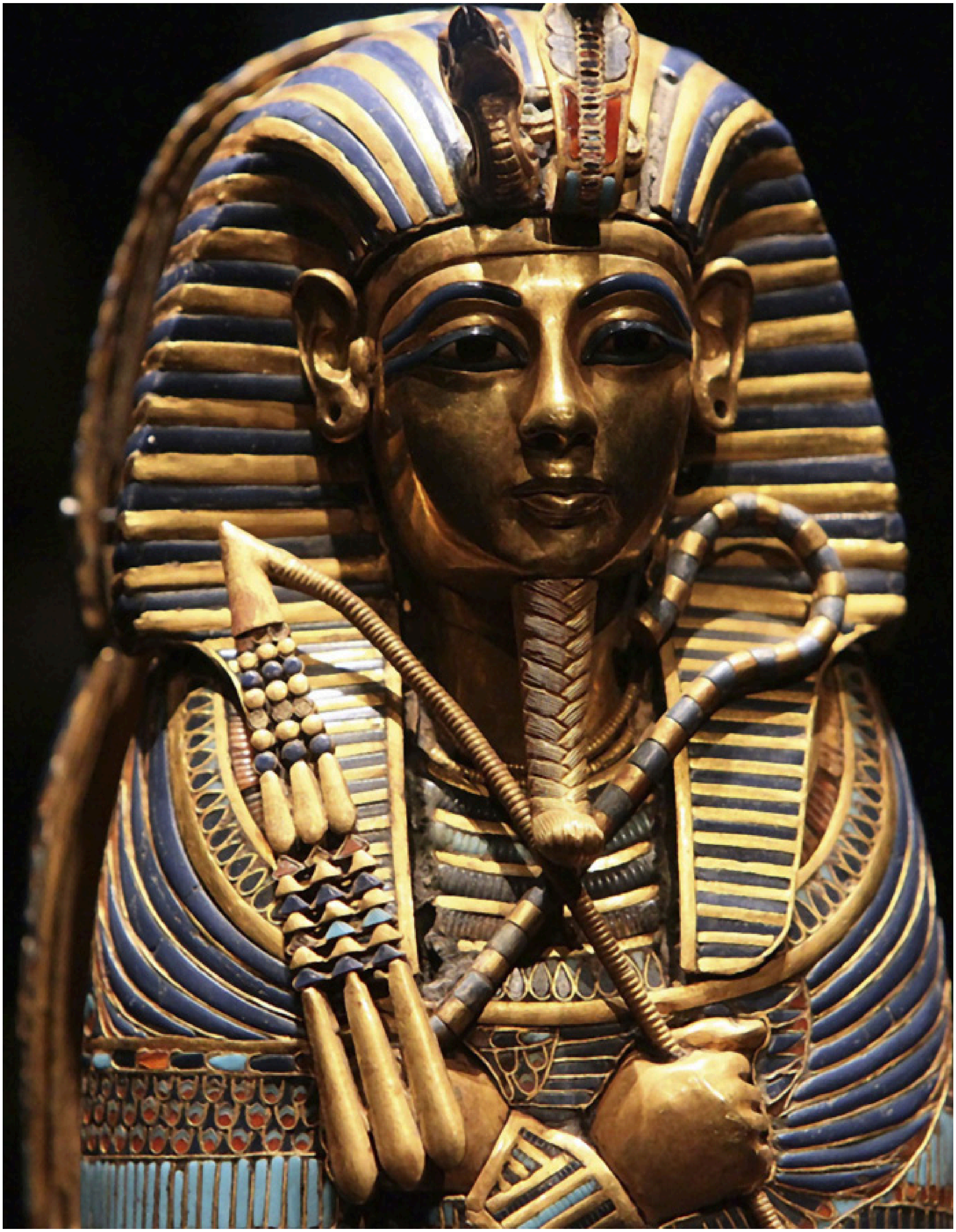
Cleopatra's Needle ready to begin its journey to England (1870s).

However, the tomb of Tutankhamen proved as elusive for Carter as it had been for Davis. Carnarvon summoned Carter in 1922 to his seat at Highclere Castle near Newbury in England to tell him he was abandoning their partnership. Carter persuaded Carnarvon to finance one more season and returned to Egypt. On 4th November 1922, just three days after starting his new dig, Carter found the top of a sunken staircase that would reveal 12 steps disappearing into the rubble. A bit deeper he found a plastered door covered in wax seals. Restraining himself, he quickly blocked the hole up again and sent a telegram to Carnarvon in England, 'at last I have made a wonderful discovery in valley - a magnificent tomb with seals intact; recovered same for your arrival. Congratulations, Carter.'

Carnarvon arrived two weeks later with his daughter, Lady Evelyn Herbert. They were concerned to find signs that the tomb had been entered in antiquity. By 4 pm on the afternoon of 26th November they found a second door, again sealed with plaster and seals. Carter made a small hole and inserted a candle. Carnarvon anxiously asked if he could see anything and

Carter answered, ‘Yes, wonderful things.’ later Carter wrote, ‘at first I could see nothing, the hot air escaping from the chamber causing the candle flame to flicker, but presently, as my eyes grew accustomed to the light, details of the room within emerged slowly from the mist, strange animals, statues, and gold - everywhere the glint of gold.’[17]

Carter’s permit stated that should they find the tomb they had to wait for the arrival of the officials of the Egyptian Antiquities Service but Carter, Carnarvon and Lady Herbert went straight into the tomb. In contravention of all standard procedure, Carter then took out an axe and cut the mummy into 18 pieces, detaching the arms and legs and severing the head from the neck, to ascertain what amulets were hidden around the body. The amulets and jewellery were stuck fast with solidified embalming fluid to the body, the casket and the golden mask, and hot knives were used to dig them out.



Tutankhamen’s sarcophagus.

All Carter's actions point towards a man in a hurry to remove what he could before the Egyptian authorities arrived. It is believed that he removed 150 gold amulets and even a gold disk mask weighing 11 kilograms. Some of these objects were found in Carter's home after his death in 1939. Carter and Carnarvon invited a group of 34 celebrities to visit the tomb in 1923, which included only six Egyptians and granted exclusive reporting rights on their find to the *The Times* (London). Both these actions fuelled Egyptian nationalism and demands that the contents of the tomb stay in Egypt, despite Carnarvon having some rights to ownership under the terms of his excavation permit.

The Times' down-market rival, the *Daily Express* thundered, 'By handing over what may be called journalistic rights in the Valley of the Tombs they treated the find in advance as their own private property. The Egyptian government with its newly-awaited sense of nationality has forwarded the contrary view that king Tutankhamen and his belongings are the national treasure of Egypt.'[18]

The major pieces, such as the famous gold funeral mask and coffin and countless gold animals, toys and objects, remained in Egypt and are an excellent source of income for Egypt. They are amongst the most widely travelled artefacts in the world. The landmark 'Treasures of Tutankhamen' exhibition of 1972 at the British Museum was attended by 1.6 million people, with an 8-hour queue for tickets. An exhibition in the United States organised by the Metropolitan Museum in 1976-1979 attracted over 8 million people. The items have been on tour in different countries ever since.

On 5th April 1923, Carnarvon died in the Continental-Savoy Hotel in Cairo from an infected mosquito bite, giving rise to the story of the 'Curse of Tutankhamen'. Carter, however, lived on until 1939 and made an inventory of Carnarvon's collection, which totalled 1218 pieces. According to his will, should his wife wish to dispose of the collection, the British Museum would have the first right of refusal at a reduced price of £20,000. However, Lady Carnarvon was unenthusiastic about the British Museum getting such a deal and she contacted the director of the Museum and gave him until 4 pm. that afternoon to agree to the purchase. Museums, unlike private collectors, can never make an agreement to purchase without countless meetings and, sure enough, the Museum failed to give her an answer in time. Lady Carnarvon then sold the collection for US$145,000 to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, where it remains today.

[1] Parsons, Marie, ‘Circus Giant and Collector of Egyptian Antiquities’, www.touregypt.net/featurestories/belzoni.htm.

[2] Chamberlin, Russell, *Loot, the Heritage of Plunder,* Thames and Hudson, 1983, p. 53.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 53.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 59.

[5] Dunn, Jimmy, ‘The Temple of Philae’, www.touregypt.net.

[6] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 59.

[7] Belzoni, Giovanni Battista, *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs and Excavations in Egypt and Nubia,* 1820.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Chamberlin, op. cit., p. 58.

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 61.

[11] *Ibid.,* p. 62.

[12] *Ibid.,* p. 64.

[13] *Ibid.,* p. 65.

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 65.

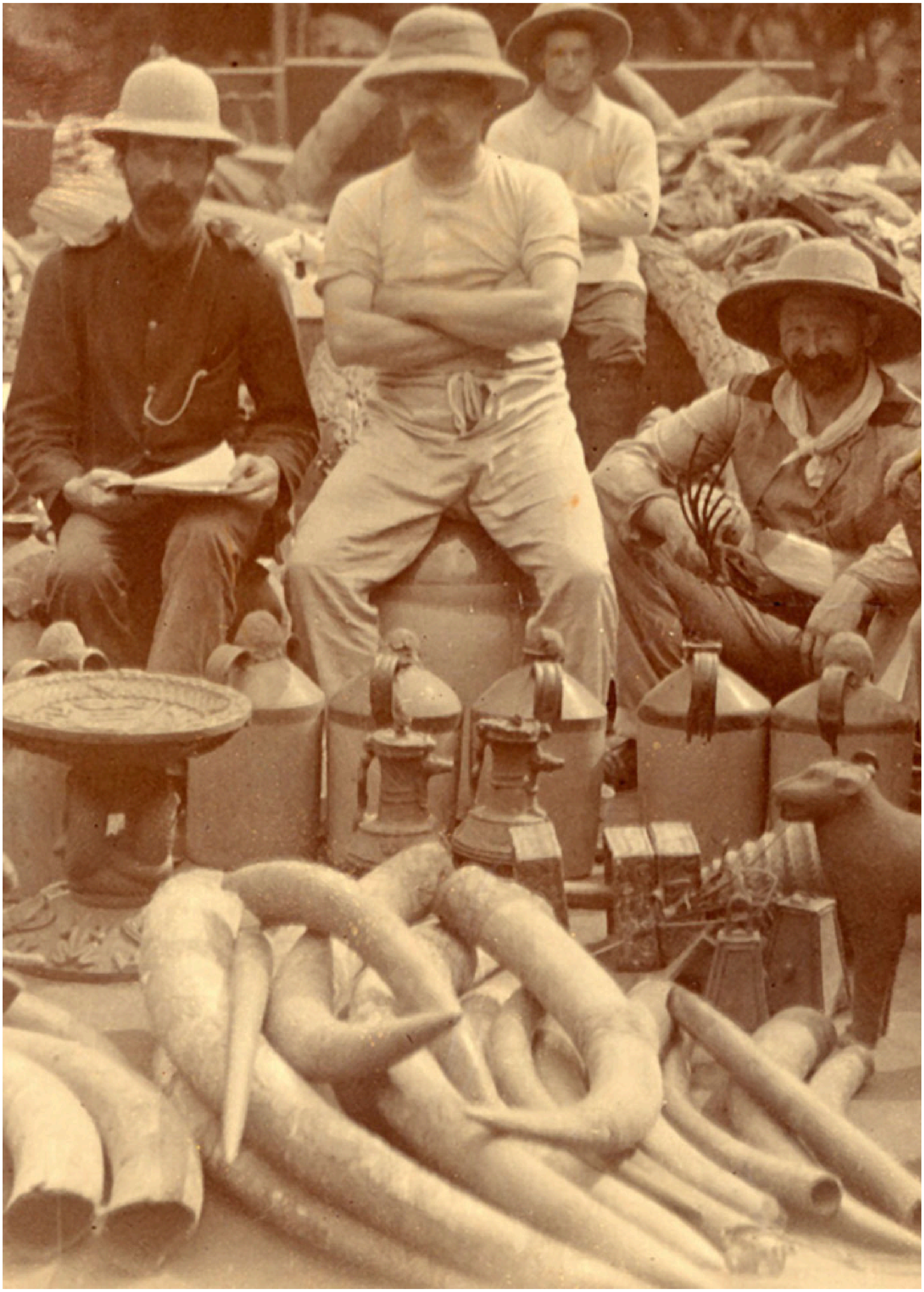
[15] Dunn, Jimmy, ‘Lord Carnarvon’, www.touregypt.net/featurestories/carnarvon.htm.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 62.

11 - The British Museum and punitive expeditions against Ashanti and Benin



Detail of photograph showing members of the Benin Expedition. In the foreground a collection of looted Benin objects. Benin Expedition 1897.

> 'One of the first objects that met our sight was a negro freshly crucified after the African fashion sitting on a stool with extended arms lashed to a framework of poles... I fear it was in honour of our arrival. We than marched over the space before the King's palace. It was strewn with human skulls and bones like pebbles. Our first visit to the palace showed us the body of a fine young woman fastened to the top of a tree - a fetish for rain.'
>
> - Sir Richard Burton writing in Fraser's Magazine 1862[1]

The British Museum is the largest museum of human history and contains 11 million objects. It was based around the collections of the physician Sir Hans Sloane and was the first public, historical and secular museum in the world. Sloane's collection contained 71,000 objects and included books, manuscripts, natural history specimens, drawings and antiquities. King George II founded the British Museum with an act of parliament on 7th June 1753 and Sloane's collection was enhanced by the addition of the libraries of Sir Robert Cotton and the Earls of Oxford.

The Museum was the first of its kind that neither belonged to Church nor King, and was open to the public and aimed to collect everything. With the acquisition of Montagu House for £20,000, a reading room was opened to scholars on 15th January 1759. In 1772 the Museum acquired its first collection of antiquities from Sir William Hamilton and started to receive gifts such as David Garrick's 1000 printed plays. In 1778 it received oceanic and native artefacts brought back from the South Seas by Captain Cook. Clayton Mordaunt Cracherode added his extensive collection of coins, gems, prints and drawings in 1800.

In the early nineteenth century, taste was for Greek, Roman and Egyptian artefacts. In 1802 King George III presented the *Rosetta Stone*, and gifts and purchases from Henry Salt included the colossal bust of *Ramesses II* in 1818. The Charles Townley collection of ancient sculpture was acquired in 1805 and the *Elgin marbles* in 1818. The near Eastern collection was started with the Babylonian and Assyrian antiquities from the widow of Claudius James Rich. Sir Austen Henry Layard excavated at Nionicede from 1845 to 1847 and later at Kuyunjik and Asher, sending back the huge winged bulls, the *Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III* and the sculptures of Asher-Naisirpal.

The Museum continued to expand through the efforts of directors such as Sir Wallis Budge. It added to its collections by acquisition (*Elgin marbles*), war booty (*Rosetta stone*), partage (from its own sponsored nineteenth-century excavations like Charles Fellows' at Xanthos), donations and bequests (Clayton Cracherode, Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, Sir Thomas Grenville and many others) and punitive expeditions (Ashanti and Benin).

The original 1753 bequest has grown to encompass 13 million objects at the British Museum, 70 million at the Natural History Museum and 150 million at the British Library. The British Museum covers an area of over 75,000 square metres of exhibition space and shows approximately 50,000 items. The Egyptian galleries contain 110,000 objects and are second in size only to the Cairo Museum which has 150,000, followed by the Petrie Museum (80,000), the Louvre (60,000), and the Metropolitan (36,000). The 140 mummies, along with other artefacts associated with the dead, are the Museum's most visited attraction, but other important Egyptian antiquities include: the *Rosetta Stone*, the bust of *Ramesses II*, the head of *Amenhotep II*, the *Ginger Mummy* and the *Amarna tablets*.

The Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities is the world's most comprehensive collection and contains over 100,000 objects. Important artefacts include the *Elgin marbles*, the *Bassae sculptures*, the *Mausoleum of Halicarnassus*, the *Nereid monument from Xanthos*, the *Portland vase* and the *Warren cup*. The Department of the Middle East incorporates the Islamic Department (40,000 objects) and the Department of Asia and contains 330,000 objects. This department includes the extensive treasures from Nimrud, Nineveh and Khorsabad and includes the '*Cyrus cylinder*,' the *Oxus treasure*, the 'Royal Lion Hunt' scenes, countless Alabaster bas-reliefs and the 'Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III.' The Department of Asia has 75,000 objects and includes the finest collection of sculpture from the Indian subcontinent and outstanding collections of Japanese and Chinese paintings, porcelain, lacquer, jade and bronze.

The Department of Prints and Drawings ranks as one of the three largest in the world alongside the Louvre and the Hermitage. It consists of 50,000 drawings and 2 million prints. There are groups of drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Rubens, Watteau and 138 Dürers. There are also departments of conservation, coins, prehistory, Africa and a library of 350,000 books.

The Museum is the greatest museum in the world and its contents are unequalled. However, it is also the largest depository of looted goods. The Museum trustees and curators are defensive about restitution. They point out that they are an appropriate custodian of such artefacts and that they have an inalienable right to these objects under British law. The original charter of the Museum has been recodified several times, the most recent being in 1963. In Section 3, Subsection 4 of the British Museum Act of 1963 it prohibits the trustees of the Museum from disposing of objects, 'vested in the Trustees of the Museum as part of the collections of the Museum.'

There are always outstanding restitution claims and some of the more persistent have been:

Elgin Marbles - consistently claimed by Greece, backed by UNESCO.

Benin Bronzes - claimed by Nigeria, 30 pieces returned by the British Museum privately in the 1960s.

Ashanti Gold objects - claimed by Ghana.

Ethiopian Tabots - claimed by Ethiopia. These tabots (tablets) are considered sacred, kept in a locked room and no one, including the current director Neil MacGregor, is allowed to see them.

Four drawings stolen by the Nazis - £175,000 compensation paid to Uri Peled by the British Museum.

Achaemenid Empire gold and silver artefacts from the Oxus Treasure - claimed by Tajikistan.

Aboriginal human remains - returned to Tasmania by the British Museum.

Mold's Golden Cape - claimed by Wales.

Rosetta Stone and other Egyptian artefacts - claimed by Egypt.

In the twentieth century an interest developed for Oceanic and African items and the Museum began to build a collection that today consists of over 350,000 items. Missionaries sent back items of interest. The Vatican was an early beneficiary of this practice and in 1925, Pope Pius XI set up the Vatican Ethnological Museum to house the objects. That museum contains 60,000 objects including 10,000 from Africa, 10,000 from the Americas, 6,000 from Oceania and 15,000 labelled prehistoric. Pope Pius explained his motivation for the museum saying, '(the) dawn of faith among the infidel of today can be compared to the dawn of faith which... illuminated pagan Rome.'[2]

The scope of the British Museum's collection of Oceanic and African artefacts continues to expand today with ongoing research in Alaska, the Canadian Arctic, the northwest coast of America, the Caribbean, Ecuador, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Ghana, Mali and Ethiopia. Between 1970 and 1998 this part of the Museum was housed at 6 Burlington Gardens in the Museum of Mankind, but this building was subsequently repossessed by the Royal Academy and the department is back in the British Museum complex off Great Russell St. Some of the finest pieces come from the 'punitive expeditions' to the Ashanti (in modern-day Ghana) and the Benin (in modern-day Nigeria).

Since the early sixteenth century Europeans had been exploring the fever-ridden West African coast and setting up small trading posts. Slaves and gold were available in abundance, justifying the considerable risks. Although trading was established along the 'Gold Coast', none had dared venture inland or tried to penetrate the thick forest. The natives emerged to trade gold in the form of ornaments, nuggets or dust, which the traders melted down into bullion. The Ashanti, presided over by a king or Ashantehene, ruled the interior and their complex society was martial and similar to the Zulus. The Ashantehene derived his supernatural authority from a golden stool, which was searched for by the Europeans, but never found.

The first European to venture inland was a 26-year-old agent of the British West Africa Company called T. E. Bowdich, who travelled the 150 miles inland to the Ashanti capital of Kumasi in a difficult three-week expedition in 1817. Bowdich's report fired European imagination with the possibility of plundering gold. He described that the spectacle:

> exceeded our original expectations... The sun reflected with a glare scarcely more supportable than the heat from the massy gold ornaments which glistened in every direction... massy gold necklaces, intricately wrought, suspended Moorish charms: a band of gold and beads circled the knees; small circles of gold, like guinea rocks and casts of animals, were strung round their ankles; rude lumps of gold hung from their left wrists which were so heavily laden as to be supported on the heads of their handsomest boys. Gold and silver pipes and canes dazzled the eye in every direction. Wolves' and rams' heads, as large as life, cast in gold, were suspended from their gold-handled swords.[3]

The vigorous Ashanti nation soon started to clash with the Europeans. The Ashanti murdered a governor and the Ashantehene had his skull gold chased and used it as a drinking vessel. In 1867 a new Ashantehene ascended the throne called Kofi Karikari, renamed 'King Coffee' by the English. Karikari declared, 'My business shall be war' and tension escalated.

The British bought a coastal fort named Elmina from the Dutch, ignoring Karikari's claim that the fort belonged to him. Karikari drank a toast from the unfortunate former governor's skull and then marched for the coast with a considerable army, commencing what the British called the Ashanti wars and the Ashanti called the Sargenti wars. Sargenti was their translation of the name of the soldier who led the British campaign - Wolseley.

Garnet Joseph Wolseley (1833-1913) was the consummate Victorian soldier, except that his military career was based on merit rather than by purchase. He was popular with the men and surrounded himself with a group of forward-thinking officers known as the 'Wolseley Ring.'. When the Foreign Office was looking for an officer to lead the planned punitive expedition against the Ashanti in 1873, Wolseley was a natural choice.

Wolseley was born in Golden Bridge, Co. Dublin in Ireland in 1833, into a military family. Educated in Dublin, he obtained a commission as an ensign in the 12th Foot in March 1852. He served in the second Burmese War and was wounded at the battle of Donaby. Promoted to lieutenant, he transferred into the 90th Light Infantry and saw action at Balaklava and Sevastopol in the Crimean War in 1854. He was wounded twice before leaving the Crimea in July 1856. He was twice mentioned in despatches and received several medals for bravery including the French Legion of Honour. On route to China in March 1857 his transport ship, the *Transit*, was wrecked off the strait of Banka. Later that March he distinguished himself at the relief of the siege of Lucknow and in 1858 he participated in the Baiswara, trans-Gogra and trans-Rapti campaigns suppressing the Indian Mutiny. He was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and received the Mutiny Medal and clasp. In the Anglo-French expedition to China in 1860 he was present at the battle of Sin-ho, the capture of Tang-ku and the entry into Peking.

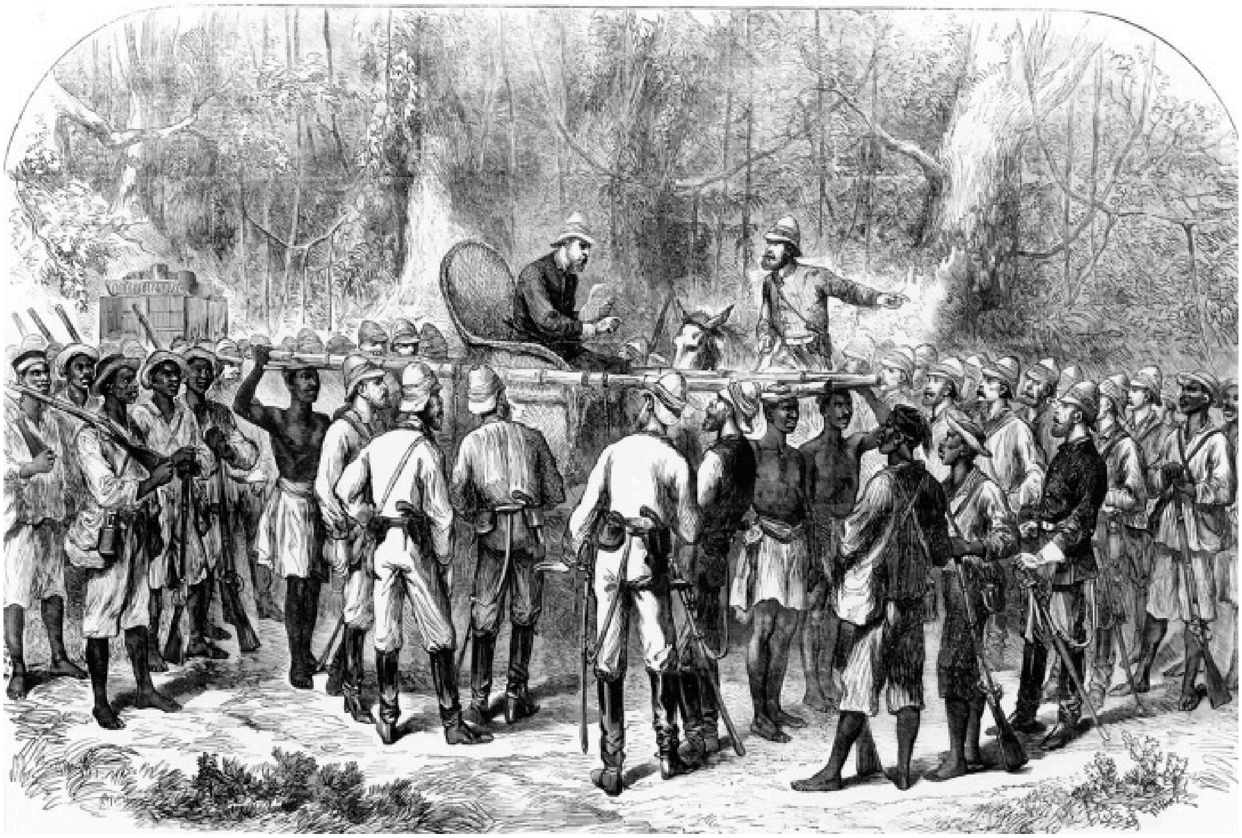
In November 1861 Wolseley left for several years' service in Canada and he published the first of several pamphlets devoted to improving the welfare of the British soldier, *Soldier's Pocket Book for Field Service*. In

1873 he commanded the expedition to Ashanti, having survived 20 years of frontline warfare, and although stiff from his wounds and blind in one eye, he brought considerable experience to the task. After the Ashanti expedition Wolseley served in Cyprus, the Zulu wars and Egypt, becoming Field Marshal Viscount Wolseley and Commander in Chief of British land forces 1895-1901 before publishing *The Story of a Soldier's Life* in 1903.

When Wolseley set off for the Ashanti campaign in 1873, he was accompanied by a press corps, which meant that the Ashanti campaign was one of the most documented of the colonial wars.

Wolseley arrived in 1873 and set up a base camp on the coast at Cape Castle. The punishing heat was allied to endemic fever. Henry Morton Stanley, the journalist famous for his earlier encounter with the explorer Livingstone, described the base camp, 'A town like a smoking volcano, blazing and burning in the hollows between the seven hills, domed by a sky of brass seven times heated by fire. In these smoking hollows, subjected to the heat of the sky of brass, are young English officers, fresh from the cool shades of the willows, the elms, and the oaks of England.'[4] The fever claimed 42 out of the 92 labourers who had been brought in from Sierra Leone. An old Africa hand had advised Wolseley, 'I suggest every man takes a coffin with him.'

The density of the jungle proved to be a psychological barrier as well as a physical one. The Europeans found the jungle claustrophobic. In WWII the Malays coined an expression, to run 'amok', for both Japanese and European soldiers who went mad in the jungles of Burma and Malaysia. Stanley described the jungle, 'It is so dense in places that one wonders at first sight how naked people can have the temerity to risk their bodies in what must necessarily punish their unprotected cuticles most painfully.'[5]



The Ashanti War (1873-1874) Garnet Joseph Wolseley (1833-1913) receiving news from the front.

Wolseley had dealt with jungle warfare in his *Advice to Soldiers* booklet, ‘Fighting in the bush is very like fighting in the twilight: no one can see further than a few files to right or left. Great steadiness and self-confidence are therefore required from every person engaged.’ Wolseley abandoned the standard-issue uniforms and let his soldiers wear loose-fitting garments and operate in small independent units. His belief in the inherent superiority of the white man echoed those of his time, ‘It must never be forgotten that providence has implanted in the heart of every native of Africa a superstitious awe of the white man and dread that prevents the Negro from daring to meet us face to face in combat.’ Each English soldier with his breech-loader could account for 20 Ashantis with their old flint muskets firing pieces of stone, which couldn’t penetrate clothing beyond around 40 to 50 yards.

As Wolseley’s force closed in on Kumasi, Karikari’s enthusiasm waned and a stream of envoys came asking for peace. Stanley wrote, ‘Having acquired such rich territory from the Dutch, the British should not have been so greedy as to take it all. They should be aware of the Ashantee anxiety to have some strip of coast.’[6]

A century later the Ghanese government are quite certain of Karikari's pacific intentions, 'It is palpably clear from the records, as well as Ashanti oral traditions, that the Ashanti did not want to fight the British and did not believe the British troops would actually go to Kumasi. Indeed, not only did the Ashantehene withdraw his army from the coast in November 1873 but actually disbanded it on his return home.'[7]

Wolseley ignored their peace envoys. He wrote to the Secretary of State with a soldier's logic, 'There is sir, but one method of freeing these settlements from the continued menace of Ashantee invasion and that is to defeat Ashantee army in the field, and, if necessary, to pursue it into its own land and march victorious on the Ashantee capital.'[8]

Wolseley sent an ultimatum to the king: to release all prisoners, in particular three European missionaries, to hand over some hostages including the king's mother, and to pay an indemnity of 50,000 ounces of gold to cover the British expenses incurred in the war.

It seems likely that Wolseley would not have been so determined without gold's tantalising gleam from the jewellery adorning all the Ashanti he came across. The 50,000 ounces requested was a sizable sum, but was probably actually the forecast cost of the expedition as far as Wolseley could calculate it. Bowdich's report on the treasures at Kumasi were in the thoughts of every soldier in Wolseley's army as they approached the city, as they had seen how the locals used gold dust to trade for goods. Gold did indeed underpin the entire Ashanti economy. Taxes were collected in the form of gold dust and tax collectors trawled the kingdom extracting dues, keeping 15% for themselves. The Ashantehene kept gold mines operating at full capacity manned by slaves captured in local tribal wars. All nuggets over a certain size became the property of the king and he kept a 'great chest' of gold ,which was the treasury of the kingdom. Adulteration of gold dust by incorporating shavings of lesser metals was punishable by death.

The Ashanti army fought skirmishes but basically retreated and the king's pleadings for a peaceful resolution to the crisis became more insistent.

The British lost 68 dead and 394 wounded and the Ashanti over 3000 dead. When the British forces of 118 officers and 1044 men with 449 African supporters entered Kumasi, it was an anti-climax. The king had fled with his stool, and his army milled around in the city without resistance. Wolseley realised that demanding that the 5000 Ashanti disarm would have caused a riot. He sent an envoy to the king asking him to come in for talks and made camp in the city.

The Ashanti army melted away into the surrounding jungle. Stanley observed that Wolseley should have disarmied them as his troops were in constant fear of an attack. Stanley was pleasantly surprised with the size of the city (3.5 miles in circumference) and its general order and cleanliness, but horrified by the execution site:

> A narrow footpath led into this grove, and now the foul smells became so suffocating that we were glad to produce our handkerchiefs to prevent the intolerable and almost palpable odour from mounting the brain and overcoming us. It was almost impossible to stop longer than to take general view of the great Golgotha. We saw thirty to forty decapitated bodies in the last stages of corruption, and countless skulls which lay piled in heaps and scattered over a wide extent.[9]

Wolseley waited for the appearance of the king but a severe rain storm made staying in the city untenable for the army. He realised he could be counter-attacked at any moment and made plans to evacuate the city. With no sign of his ransom or the king, he instructed his troops to ransack the city of every object of perceived value.

The palace was in the centre of the city, a building that Stanley reckoned could quarter 1000 men. Stanley made an inventory of the collection of objects housed in the private quarters which contained treasure mixed with the mundane. He found a 31-year-old copy of the *The Times*, dated 17 October 1843, as well as a copy of the *Bristol Courier* of the same date. There were Kidderminster carpets, porcelain and chinaware amidst huge quantities of gold ornaments and weaponry.

The storm continued unabated. The soldiers had only four candles providing light for a full inventory of the Ashanti gold. Wolseley’s personal secretary, Brakenbury, wrote that the men tried only to take what they thought looked the most valuable such as:

> gold masks, whose object it is so difficult to divine. One of these, weighing more than forty one ounces, represented a ram’s head and the others faces of savage men, about half the size of life. Box after box was opened and its contents hastily examined... aggrey beads and coral ornaments of various descriptions were heaped together in boxes and calabashes. Silver plate was carried off and doubtless much left behind. Swords, gorgeous ammunition belts, caps mounted in solid gold, knives

> set in gold and silver, bags of gold dust and nuggets; carved stools mounted in silver, calabashes worked in silver and gold, silks embroidered and woven, all were passed in review. The sword presented by her Majesty to the king was found and carried off; and thousands of things were left behind that would be worth fabulous sums in cabinets at home.[10]

Whilst troops removed the treasure, sappers laid mines. The army moved out at 6 am the following morning and the sappers blew up the city 2 hours later. Brackenbury reported that despite three days' rain the thatched roofs went up as if they were on a bonfire. Wolseley later told the Secretary of State that his hasty departure had been caused by freakish storms, but he was nervous of counter-attack, and Stanley wrote that, 'the real cause of our panic-like departure from Coomassie was want of food.'

The army followed its original route with difficulty back to the coast, the entire campaign having taken a little under 2 months. On reaching what was termed civilisation, the expeditionary force turned to liquidating its treasures. They were auctioned off for £5000, which clearly did not represent the entire loot that had been removed from the palace.

Stanley felt that Wolseley's failure to set a proper guard during the storm on the first night caused heavy losses for the expedition, 'It is certain that much valuable plunder was taken from Coomassie during the night. Assistant-Commissioner Ravenscroft, while looking for gin to supply the troops with grog, stumbled across a house whose courtyard was crowded with objects of value. In the morning, when he visited the house again, he found the whole had been carried away.'[11] Some looting might have been done by the Ashanti, but there was also considerable private looting by the British soldiers as Ashanti treasures have been appearing on the international art market ever since. In 1976, for example, a gold Ashanti headband was offered for sale by the descendants of a Lieutenant Frederick Cowan of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers who had found it in the king's dressing room in the palace. It made US$6,000.

Ashanti gold. Head-dress or ceremonial hat made of shells, gold, deer skin and silver.

Wolseley removed nothing for himself and only tried to bid for a few items at the auction, later writing, 'I had set my heart upon a bronze group of about fifty little figures representing the King of Ashanti being carried in state and had asked my staff to bid £6 for it. It went for £100.'[12] Wolseley was realistic that the 50,000 ounces of gold would probably never be paid and he regretted that he hadn't put more pressure on the king, 'I thought it very doubtful whether the whole of the money will ever be obtained by her Majesty's government... I have caused the wording of this clause to be carefully framed so as to be clear that the money is only to be paid in such instalments as her Majesty may direct.' When the second punitive expedition was launched against the Ashanti king Prempeh in 1896, the reason given for the invasion was the non-payment of the 1874 gold ransom.

The king actually handed over only 1000 ounces of gold worth about £4000 which, added to the £5000 raised in the auction, meant that he contributed only £9000 towards the cost of the war which had escalated to around £50,000.

Wolseley received thanks in both houses of parliament and a grant of £25,000. He was promoted to major general, justifying his own belief that he had had to sack Kumasi and return with some plunder to achieve his own personal objectives. He was also given the freedom of the city of London with a sword of honour and was made an honorary D.C.L. of Oxford and LL.D. of Cambridge universities.

Although a financial disaster, the expedition did result in the British Museum becoming the beneficiary of some of the finest gold artefacts ever to have been produced in Africa. It is unclear whether the Ashanti treasure entered the Museum as war booty, by acquisition from those who had bought it at the auction or by gift from the returning soldiers.

As with all loot, origins of artworks are rapidly obscured. An exquisite soul bearer's badge had been mounted in the centre of a silver gilt dish by Robert Garrard for the 3rd Marquess of Exeter within a year. The Marquess's coat of arms and a legend are tooled onto the dish, 'The gold ornament in the centre of this dish is a portion of the indemnity paid by the Ashanti King Coffee Calcalli to her Majesty's Forces under the command of Major General Sir Garnet Wolseley, January 1874.' The dish and medal fell into the hands of the family of Major General Lord Chelsmore, whose descendants sold it to the British Museum.

Another spectacular piece of the haul was the 7¾-inch high golden head described as, 'the largest gold work known from Ashanti or indeed anywhere in Africa outside Egypt'. It was bought by Sir Richard Wallace, who bequeathed it to the British nation along with the other outstanding contents of his house in Manchester Square, now known as the Wallace Collection.

In 1971 Lord Montagu of Beaulieu raised the issue of the Ashanti treasure in the House of Lords, claiming it had been illegally removed as war booty and should be returned to Ghana, 'Are her Majesty's Government aware of the very deep feelings of the Ashanti people about the return of these sacrosanct objects - which are supposed to contain the soul of the whole people?' The under-Secretary of State pointed out that the items had been removed by treaty, the same defence the French had tried to use after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 to halt the restitution of the Napoleonic looting. Technically he was correct but it is a grey area of legality. Where to return it is not clear either because the ancient Ashanti kingdom today is contained by the boundaries of Ghana, but consists of numerous tribes descended from the original Ashanti.

On 19th February 1981 the Museum of Mankind, which then housed the British Museum's Department of Africa, started to show an exhibition entitled *Asante Kingdom of Gold*, which was formally opened by the then Ashantehene. For the Ashantehene to walk round examining all the golden regalia of his people would be the equivalent of the Queen attending an exhibition of the Crown Jewels in Ghana. The Museum recreated the palace of Ashantehene that had been blown up by Wolseley in 1874. The Ashantehene was actually attending at the invitation of the British government. The Ghanaian government pays lip service to restitution but is more ambivalent towards the issue because they believe it could stir up a wave of violent nationalism in a region that is regularly torn apart by tribal conflict. The Ashantehene was welcomed to the exhibition by the royal representative, the Duke of Gloucester, which gave rise to a tacit acknowledgement of Ashanti status.

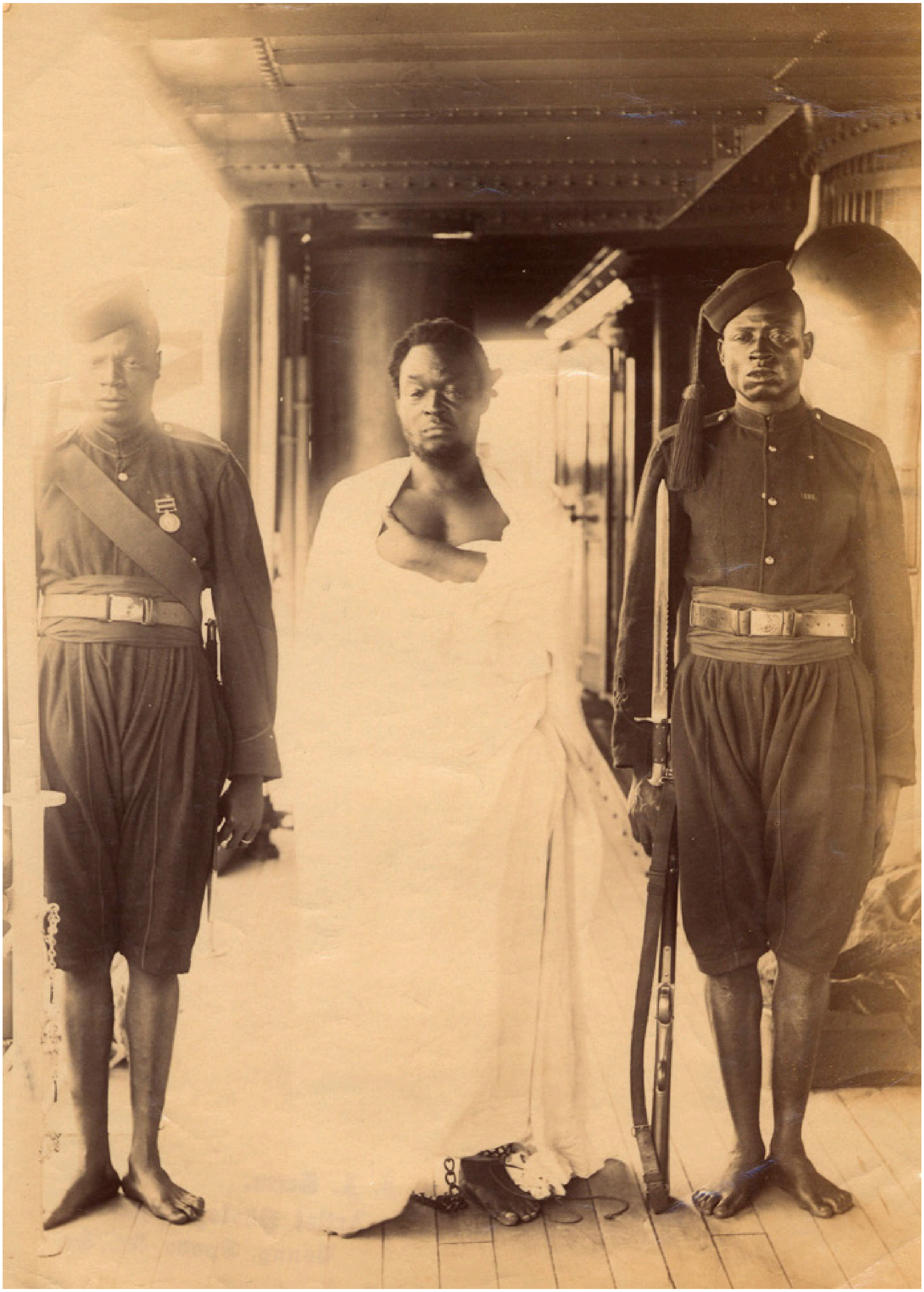
The treasures, however, remain in the British Museum today, some of the finest pieces of gold work ever to come out of Africa and an uneasy legacy of this episode of Victorian imperial aggression.

The trophy head was part of the golden treasure of King Kofi Karikari of Ashanti, an ancient kingdom in Ghana, West Africa. The treasure was seized by British soldiers on the orders of their commander, Field-Marshal Viscount Wolseley, during the Ashanti campaign of 1873.

When tensions escalated between the Kingdom of Benin (in modern-day Nigeria) and Britain in the 1890s, Garnet Wolseley's days of pursuing natives across the veldt or through the bush were long over. He had become a field marshal in 1895, a rank that is only achievable in times of war, and was Commander in Chief of British land forces. Despite having reached the pinnacle of what was possible for a British army officer, as with all soldiers, he still kept a close eye on colonial conflicts.

When a punitive expedition was planned against the Kingdom of Benin in 1897, Wolseley was instrumental in the choice of Harry Rawson as commanding officer. Despite Rawson being 10 years younger, and in the navy as opposed to the army, the two men had crossed paths several times and there was a mutual respect. They had fought together at several battles, including the storming of the Taku forts in 1858 in China, and served administratively together in Cyprus in 1878 where Rawson was Commandant of Nicosia and Wolseley was Governor of the Island.

Harry Holdsworth Rawson (1843-1910) was born in Walton-on-Hill in Lancashire on 5th November 1843. Educated at Marlborough, he joined the navy in 1857 at the age of 14. He sailed out of Spithead on the Princess Charlotte as a cadet, quickly adapting to the diet of weevilly biscuit and salt meat. One seaman was lashed to the quarter deck and flogged before they had left sight of land. When a few of the crew complained, they were clapped in irons. Rawson found that being a serviceman in Victorian England meant constant action trying to maintain control over the British Empire. He saw action at the Taku Forts, the fording of the Peiho River and the surrender of Peking, the battles of Yu Yao, Ningpo, Fungwa, Cyprus, Alexandria, Mweli, Zanzibar, Mogwane and Benin before becoming Governor of New South Wales.



Oba Ovonramwen, centre, King of Benin, wearing a cloth. Benin Expedition 1897.

Rawson was a brave man who dived into the fast-flowing Woosong River in 1860 to save a sentry who had fallen in and again into the North Sea off Antwerp in 1871 to save people from a collapsed pleasure craft. He was well organised, efficient and he had charm and a steady disposition. His writings are a master class in Victorian understatement and the antithesis of today's self-promotion-at-any-cost mentality. Rudyard Kipling's contemporary poem *If*, published in 1909, comes to mind, 'If you can meet with triumph and disaster... and treat these two imposters just the same.' Rawson's charm secured an invitation to serve on the royal yacht, the *Victoria and Albert*, where a lifelong friendship with the royal family developed, which helped advance his career.

Rawson's own writings perhaps best reveal the man. On attacking the Taku forts on the evening of 19th May 1858, Rawson later wrote:

> It was a pretty sight to see the gunboats with all the ships in tow, filing into the river under heavy fire from the forts. The shot flew over us, but now and then struck near us ... Our lieutenant had orders to take up the small arm storming party from the boats, but did not want me to go, because if I was hurt, he would be responsible for it. So I hid behind a big blue jacket, and then we all, English and French, fell into line and rushed on to the forts... At this time the Chinese were running away like mad, and I could not even get within pistol-shot of them.[13]

Sir Harry Holdsworth Rawson (1843-1910) commanding officer overseeing the punitive expedition in Benin (1897).

The young midshipman fighting beside Rawson was A. K. Wilson, who was to go on to become Sir A. K. Wilson V.C. and Admiral in charge of the British Fleet. Garnet Wolseley was also there with the infantry as deputy assistant quartermaster to General Sir Hope Grant. Rawson was one of 76 officers who witnessed the peace treaty signed at the Celestial Palace in Peking; he was 15½ years old.

Rawson's account of the battle of Ningbo reads like an extract from a *Boy's Own* adventure magazine:

> The captain sent for Douglas and myself to head the scaling party, as he determined to take the place by assault. We placed the scaling ladders against the walls and ran the field piece up. I had the trigger-line, as soon as the gun was laid the Captain gave the word. I fired, and then we rushed for the ladder, the officers being where they always ought to be, well to the front. I was half way up when smash went the ladder, and down I came flop on the ground. However, I jumped up and got to No. 2, followed closely by the bo'sun. We hadn't got up half a dozen rungs when that one broke down too, so we immediately jumped up No.3. One of my men, named Davis, was before me, and as he was climbing over the parapet he was shot through the chest, fell backwards, and after nearly taking me with him, dropped dead at the foot of the ladder. 'Up' was the order of the day. As soon as we got to the top we made a rush for the rebels, who were clustered in a heap like bees. I was firing away when a man next to me said, 'I am hard hit, Sir,' so I turned and with my handkerchief clapped on a tourniquet and stopped the bleeding. I hadn't finished when a marine fell against me severely wounded, and I had to tie him up. Then I seized his rifle and we started off along the wall to get possession of the bridge. I and three others were in the front, and we were soon joined by three or four more, when we commenced some sharp firing and drove the rebels back, holding the bridge until the captain, with the main body of men came up. We had taken a walled city in the face of fifteen thousand of the enemy with only a hundred and ninety seven men. But it was not all over, for about 500 of the rebels had reorganised themselves and were coming back to attack. So Captain Dew sings out: 'Marines to the front! Charge! Quick, or you haven't a chance!' Directly I heard this I dashed to the front, and with a cheer we charged them.[14]

The story continues how, as they were about to be overrun, with 50 of them against 500 Chinese, a 10-inch pivot gun opened up from one of the boats on the river and saved the day.

Rawson was badly wounded in the action, when a musket ball entered his leg about 5 inches above the knee, and a fellow officer named A. D. McArthur wrote, 'I can see him now, hopping along with a smile on his face, as though he was merely engaged in a one legged race.'[15] Rawson was mentioned in despatches by his commanding officer, Captain Dew, as having, ‘commanded the seamen with distinction and ability,’ and was promoted to sub-lieutenant, jumping 80 officers who were his senior. At the age of 19, Rawson was placed in charge of the 1300 Imperial Chinese Forces stationed at Ningpo. By 1865 Rawson was in command of the *Bellerophon*, one of the leading warships of the 1860s.

Before the Benin raid of 1897, Rawson had led two punitive expeditions, against the Arab chief Mourak at M’weli and Sayyid Khalid bin Barghash at the Palace at Zanzibar. At Zanzibar Rawson’s wife and son were on board his flagship and watched the palace burn after the British bombardment. Rawson’s description of the event reads like an excerpt from a Baedeker guide:

> Zanzibar can look very fair when seen in the morning light from the hills behind the city; it can look full of colour in the enriching darkening light of sunset, with its purpling roofs and copper-glowing foliage; it can look very beautiful and poetic in the full moonlight and the quiet of the tired city, hushed and still. And Zanzibar did look very beautiful that night, with the undimmed, clear moonshine, the white roofs whiter than by day, the harbour placid, the white ships resting on the blue water, the palace a blaze of light, and the garden of date-trees, with their still foliage.[16]

Shortly after the raid on Zanzibar, trouble flared up in Benin, and Rawson, as Commander in Chief of the Cape of Good Hope, led the punitive raid.

After the abolition of the slave trade at the start of the nineteenth century, the British looked for legitimate trade on the West African coast. The Benin Empire had become one of the largest of the political systems on the Guinea coast. By the middle of the sixteenth century the Oba (king) ruled a kingdom that stretched from modern-day Lagos to the Niger Delta. The Portuguese had been trading with Benin ever since they’d discovered it in 1492, but now the British wanted to supply trade goods for raw material such as palm oil, a major lubricant to the industrial revolution. By 1895, the Niger Coast Protectorate controlled all the major trading centres there except Benin.

In 1892 Captain Gallwey, the British consul of the Niger Coast Protectorate visited Benin City hoping to turn it into a British Protectorate. The Benin King Omo n’Oba Ovonramwen endorsed a friendship and trade agreement, but he declined to make Benin a British colony. There was a misunderstanding about what had been agreed and the king issued an edict barring all British officials and traders from entering his kingdom. Major Claude Maxwell MacDonald, an official of the Protectorate, considered this a hostile act.

Brass head of the Oba, King of Benin, Nigeria (16th century AD).

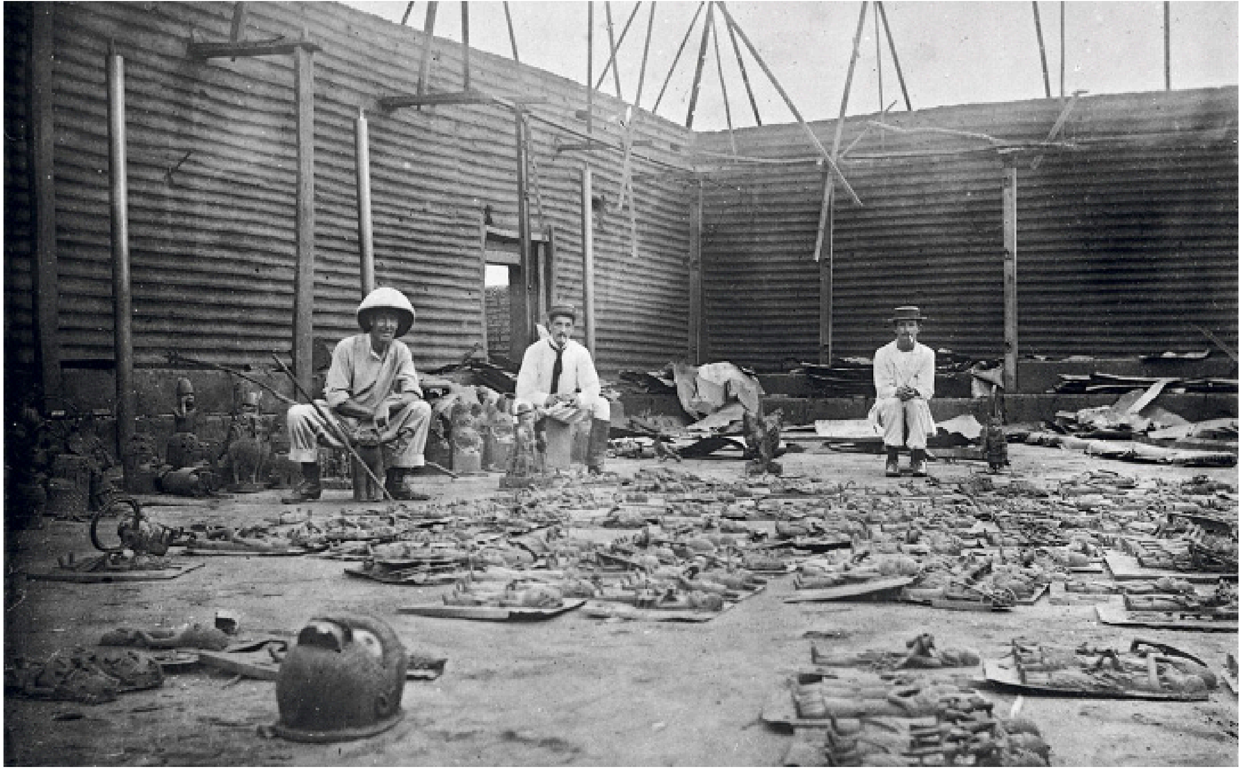
Trade on the coastal strip was less profitable than the Protectorate had hoped and tension escalated. Whilst the consul general, Ralph Moor, was away on leave, an acting consul general, James Phillips, arrived in January 1897 to take up the post. Back in England Moor was pressing for a military solution to enforce trade. The Foreign Office under Lord Salisbury expressed caution, ‘The King of Benin may have to be dealt with, but it should be set about with care and with sufficient force.’[17]

Phillips found a copy of the despatch that Moor had sent to the Foreign Office 8 months earlier, ‘An expeditionary force should be sent about January or February to remove the king and his ju ju men for the sufferings of the people are terrible.’ The Victorians were horrified by the king’s practice of crucifying women. One particular tale told how, in 1769, a French sea captain named J. F. Landolfe wanted to establish a supply of slaves and arranged an audience with the then Oba at 11 pm. to converse in private. Landolfe was conducted to the palace by 25 armed guards and left in a room with an interpreter and the Oba who remained prostrate during the interview. The Oba showed him the ivory treasury of over 3000 tusks. Then, when this agreement was ratified by the king, Landolfe was horrified when a man was brought in to be sacrificed to bring good luck to their venture. Landolfe reported that the man seemed calm before he was clubbed simultaneously from in front and behind. He was then beheaded and his blood drained into a pan.

Phillips rashly decided to approach the Oba himself to try to enforce the treaty, maybe seeing it as an opportunity to make his name. In December 1896 he requested permission from the Foreign Office to, ‘depose and remove the King of Benin.’ Without waiting for the reply, he set off for Benin from the consular base of Sapele with ten British officers, 200 African support staff and a military band.

Captain Boisragon, one of the two survivors of the expedition, later explained, ‘The object of the expedition was to try and persuade the king to let the white man come up to his city whenever they wanted to. All their horrible customs could not be put down at once, except by a strong armed expedition, but could be stamped out gradually by officials continually going up.’[18] On the other hand, Philip Igbafe, a Nigerian historian of the period writes, ‘Phillip’s visit was against the remonstrance of the Itsekiri traders, the advice of the chief Dogho (a trusted partner of the British), the Oba’s refusal and in utter disregard for the traditions and susceptibilities of the Benin people.’[19]

As Phillips’s expedition made its way towards Benin, the king and his court argued over what approach to take. The king advocated seeing if they were friendly or not and dealing with them accordingly. The radicals among his advisers argued that Phillips’s visit in defiance of the king was an insult and should be treated accordingly. The radicals carried the day and the king sent his son, Chief Ologbosheri, to ambush the party.



Interior of King's compound burnt during fire in the siege of Benin City, 1897. Three British officers of the Punitive Expedition seated with bronzes laid out in foreground.

On 4th January 1897 Ologbosheri ambushed them on the Gwato Creek and killed most of the Africans and all the whites except Captains Locke and Boisragon, who managed to escape. The British later claimed the party was unarmed so the attack was an act of murder. In fact, they had weapons but they were locked away as they were so sure they were safe.

The British organised a brutal response. Harry Rawson, now an admiral, was given the command of the punitive expedition and mobilised an elite force of 1200 British soldiers within the month. Troops were brought in from Malta, Cape Town and London and assembled at Brass, the nearest anchorage to Benin. The War Office asked for the cost and time required. .. Rawson replied by wire, 'Fifty thousand pounds and six weeks.' It actually cost £30,000 and took 4 weeks.

Rawson arrived at Brass on the 20th January with six ships, The *Barrosa*, the *Widgeon*, the *Philomel*, the *Alecto*, the *Phoebe* and the *St George*. From the fleet he landed 780 men and 280 native troops. The temperature was close to 100 oF and there was very little water. He sent off advance parties to establish water depots along the route and by the 12th

February had established bases at Ceris and Ologbo. The enemy harassed his troops in small ambushes but avoided a major battle. Rawson gave the order to torch any Benin crops or settlements he came across.

Rawson split his force into three to help with the water shortage. As they neared the city, resistance increased. Felix Roth, the surgeon of the expedition kept a diary from when he landed on the 6th February to when they retired from the ruined city on the 22nd February. The diary details, ‘We shelled the village and cleared it of natives. As the launch and surf-boats grounded, we jumped into the water... at once placing our Maxims and guns in position, firing so as to clear the bush where the natives might be hiding.’ Luckily, ‘no white men were wounded; we all got off scot free. Our black troops with the scouts and a few maxims do all the fighting.’[20]

The Maxim was the first general-purpose machine gun that used the recoil of each round to propel the next round into the chamber and thus provided its own power. Garnet Wolseley had introduced them into the British army in 1888 and ordered 120 of them. Capable of firing 600 rounds a minute, they rapidly overcame any Benin resistance. The poet Hilaire Belloc coined the rhyme:

Whatever happens, we have got
The Maxim gun, and they have not

On the 17th February Rawson’s force reached the edge of Benin City and the following morning the British attacked the city at dawn with their Maxim guns. Once the city was taken Rawson ordered his troops to destroy it and his troops went on an orgy of destruction and looting. The marines put the palaces and compounds to the torch but the fires burnt much of the invading forces’ equipment and some fine woodwork in the Oba’s palace.

In the lead-up to the invasion of the city the Oba and his court, in a fit of nerves, had indulged in a round of beheading and executions as Felix Roth described:

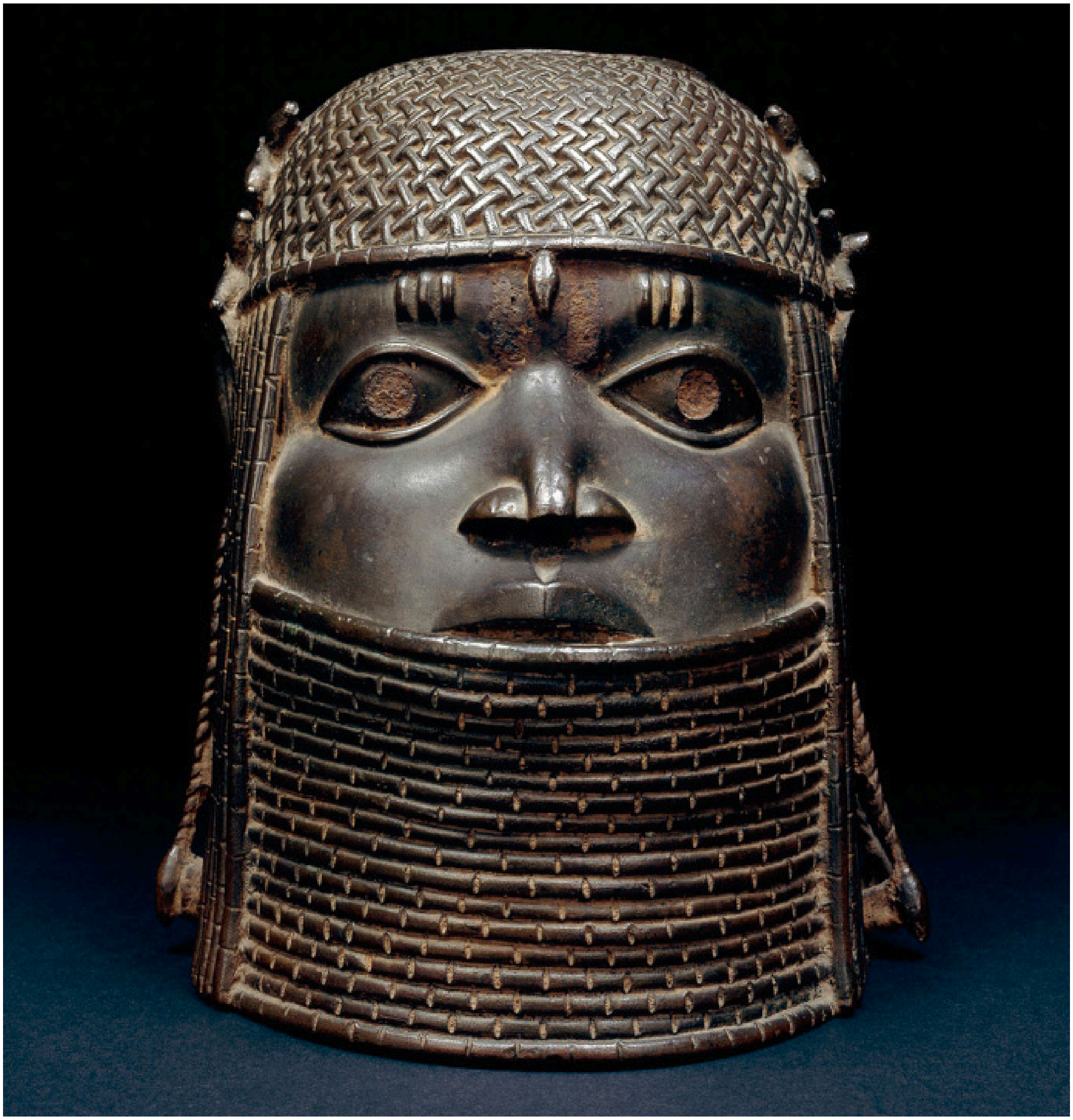
> It is a misnomer to call it a city; it is a charnel house. All about the houses and streets are dead natives, some crucified, some sacrificed on trees, others on stage erections... In front of the king’s compound stakes have been driven into the ground, and cross-pieces of wood lashed to them. On this framework live human beings are tied, to die of thirst and heat, to be dried up by the sun and eaten by the carrion birds, till the bones get disarticulated and fall to the ground. At the base of them the whole ground was strewn with human bones and decomposing bodies,

> with their heads off. Three looked like white men, but it was impossible for me to decide, as they had been there for some time... The bush, too, was filled with dead bodies, the hands being tied to the ankles so as to keep them in a sitting posture. It was a gruesome sight to see these headless bodies about, the smell being awful...[21]

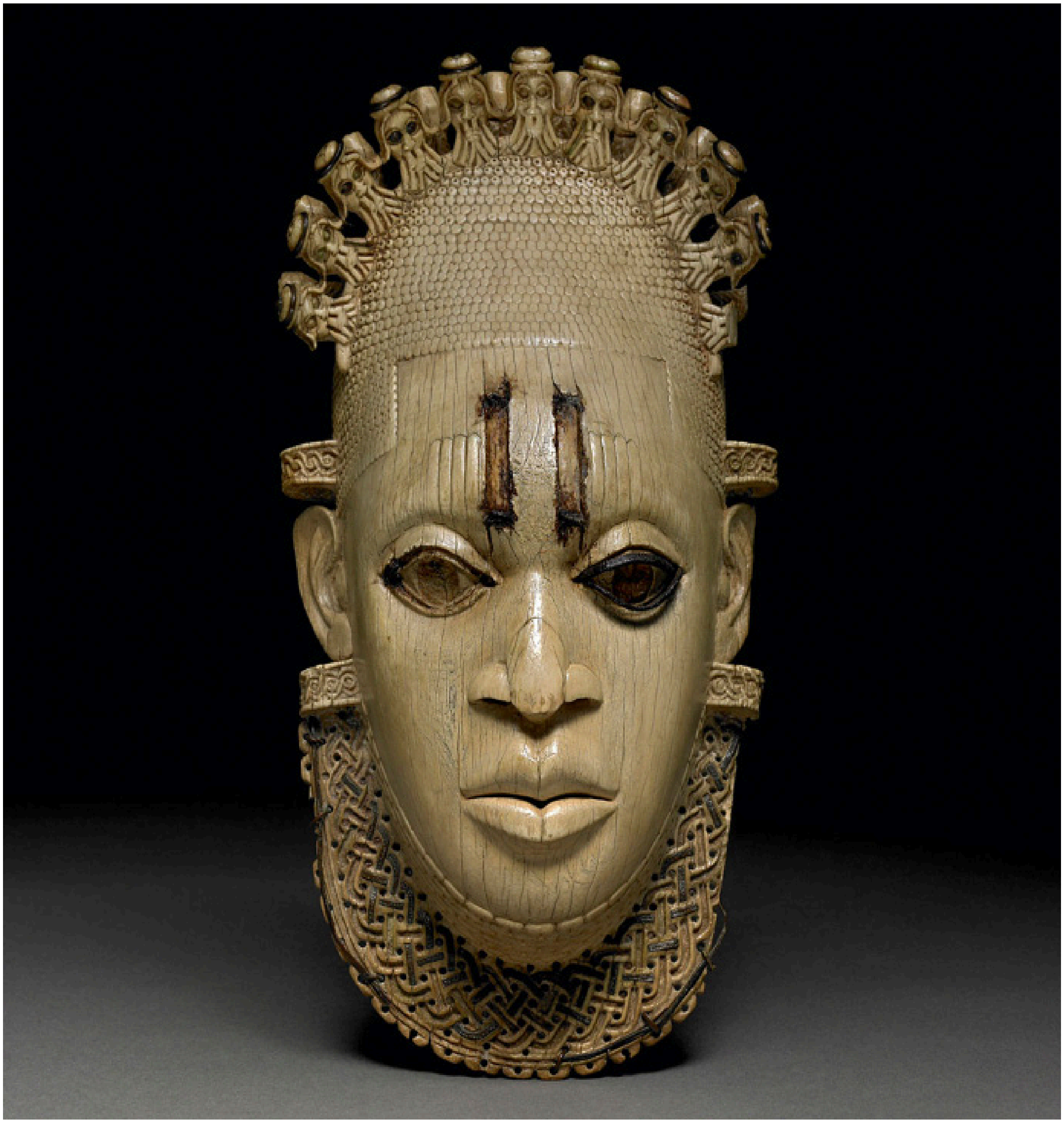
Rawson ordered anything of value to be removed as war booty. The soldiers searched for gold, and found little, but instead removed large quantities of bronzes. Although of no intrinsic value, Rawson realised the potential of these strange bronzes. Initially he presumed they must be Portuguese, Egyptian or Israeli. He couldn't believe the natives could have made such technically advanced and delicate sculptures using the *cire perdue* method.

However, the soldiers discovered the foundries and concluded that they had been made in Benin. The bronzes depict scenes from court life and images of humans in armour, including white men, probably early Portuguese explorers, as well as fish and animals. Each Benin ruler was commemorated by a bronze head, and around 30 of these memorial heads were found, some of them from the sixteenth century. Also found were ivory amulets, boxes, brass belt masks, quadrangular brass bells and brass jewellery.

Official figures record that 2500 objects were taken from Benin, including 900 bronzes. A photograph shows a group of soldiers wearing pith helmets and loose-fitting clothes sitting in the main square amidst a mass of tusks, water jugs, bowls, Benin figurines and bronze animals. The rear end of a fabulous leopard made of ivory studded with copper from the late eighteenth century visible to the left of the photograph is now in the British Museum. Two of the soldiers have officer's epaulets and one of them is making the inventory. Surgeon Roth describes the treasure, 'Every house had its alcove of various dimensions containing 'fetish' carvings and sculptures. A large part of the loot was found embedded in the walls, and occasionally in so testing the walls the soldiers put their hands into human corpses built up in them.'[22]



Bronze male head representing the Oba, Benin Edo peoples (*c.* 16th century AD)

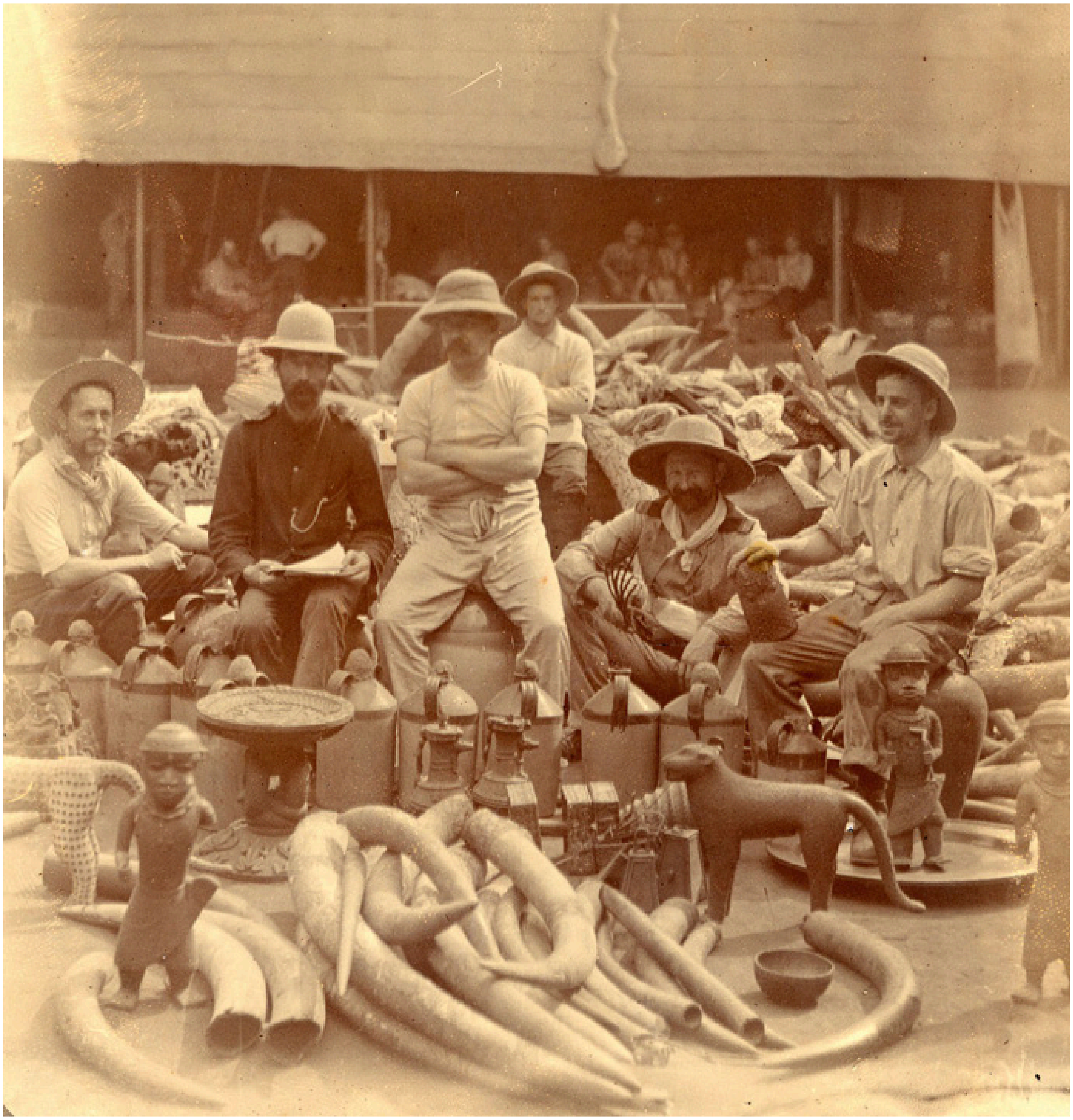


Carved ivory mask. Pendant, made of iron, elephant ivory and bronze. Edo peoples. Benin, Nigeria (*c.* 16th century AD).

The Oba controlled the ivory trade in the region and every hunter had to give up one of the elephant tusks of each elephant he killed. The ivories and bronzes were woven into every fabric of the ceremonial aspects of Benin life. Ivory's white colour, signified peace, prosperity and purity. The bronze heads of the Oba, the treasury of tusks and large collection of ivories and bronzes in the royal palace were a symbol of authority for the Oba in the same way as the royal picture collections were to Charles I of England or

Philip II of Spain. By removing the art collection and sacking the city, Rawson was completely destroying the Benin State.

Rawson returned to the coast on 22nd February. Although some of the loot was privately pilfered by the soldiers, Rawson managed to remove much of it and gave it all to the British Admiralty in England who sold it off by auction in Paris in late 1897 to help defray the expedition costs. The British Museum secured what it could, but was outbid on much of the material by German museums. The British Museum acquired around 200 plaques from the royal palace, the ivory and inlaid brass leopard and a few of the memorial Oba heads.



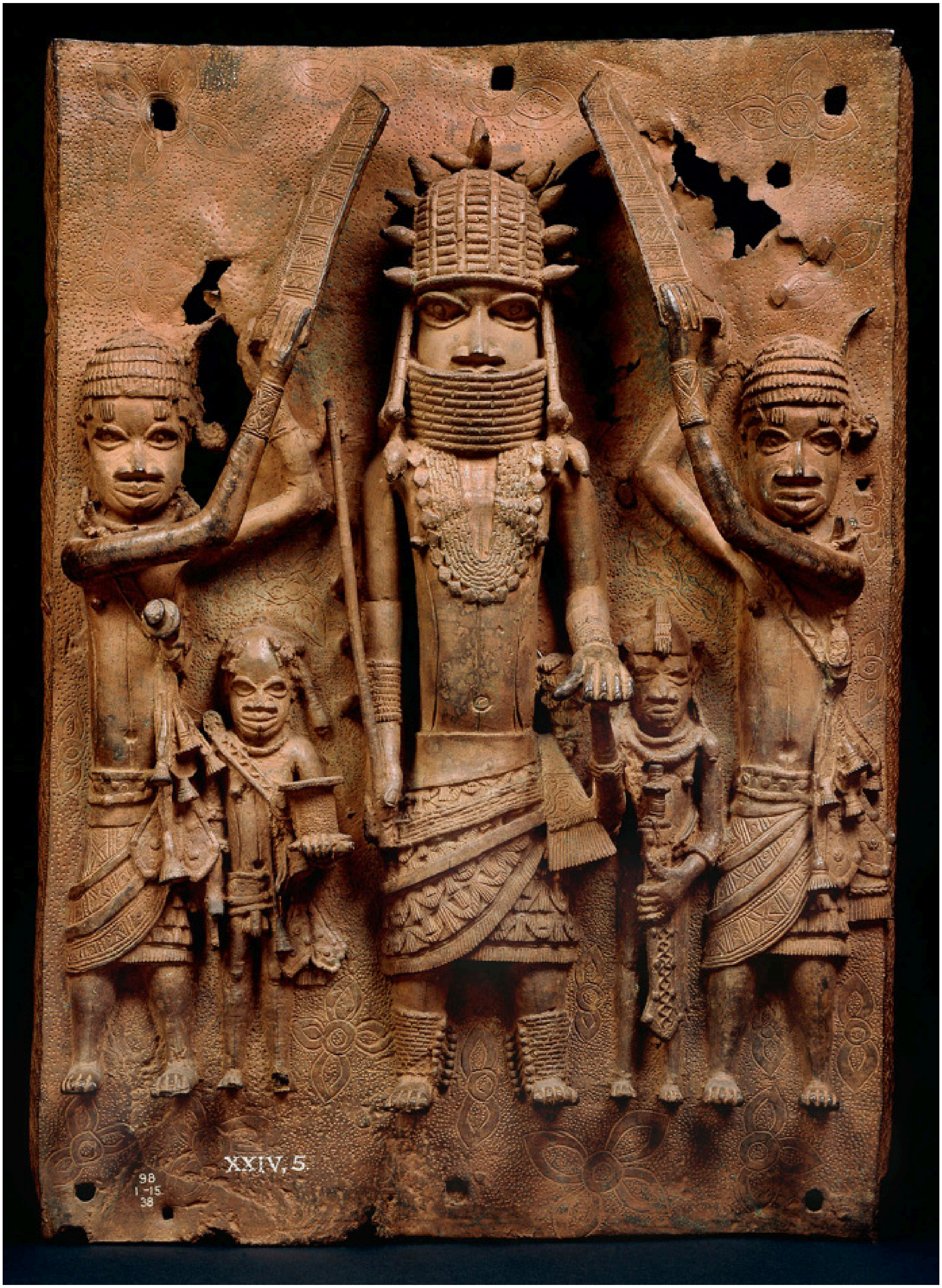
Members of the Benin Expedition (1897) with Benin loot.

H. Ling Roth, brother of surgeon Felix Roth, wrote, *Great Benin: its Customs, Art and Horrors*, published a few years after the expedition. He lamented that the Foreign Office had not given more of the bronzes to the British Museum, 'Not only was the national institution deprived of its lawful acquisition, but at the same time another government department sold for few hundred pounds a large number of castings which had costs thousands to obtain, as well as much blood of our fellow countrymen.'

The museums in Berlin bought a number of the bronzes and some are reappearing from former East Germany. The formidable early collector of tribal art, General Pitt-Rivers, secured a few pieces. Some disappeared to dealers and others vanished en route back to England. In 1980 23 pieces were auctioned from the estate of a Dutch collector making £750,000, with the Nigerian government securing a few pieces. Other items were destroyed in WWII bombing raids on Liverpool and Berlin.

The flood of these bronzes onto the international art market caused a reappraisal of African art and their status changed from native curiosities to valuable tribal art. These bronzes are rightly considered to be amongst the most important art objects to have come out of Africa and certainly the finest cast bronzes. The plaques were in boxes in the Museum of Mankind, but they are now on display in the rooms in the British Museum that house the African and Oceanic Department.

The Nigerian government has pushed for the return of these items ever since. Until the mid 1970s the restitution issue was conducted gently between museum officials. However, in 1977 Lagos was designated as the location for the pan-African cultural exhibition, Festac 1977. As a centrepiece the Africans requested the loan of an ivory mask from the British Museum that had been removed from Benin in 1897. The British Museum requested an insurance bond of £2m saying it was too delicate to be moved and that the climate in Lagos was too hot. This infuriated the Africans who could not afford the bond and thought it disingenuous to imply that the mask would not be safe in the climate of the country where it had been created. John Picton, the deputy director of the Museum of Mankind at the time said, ‘Ironically, the place where the ivory was carved is in fact the worst place to house it - the temperature and humidity is all wrong.’[23] The museum pointed out that ivory is best stored at 65°F and the average temperature of West Africa is around 85°F.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Brass plaque showing the Oba of Benin with attendants.

When Nigeria pushed harder, saying the removal was an act of cultural vandalism and outright theft, the British Museum retreated behind the safety of their charter where Section 3, Subsection 4 of the 1963 British Museum Act specifically forbids the trustees from disposing of objects. However, in March 2002, the BBC revealed that the British Museum had sold 30 of the bronzes between 1950 and 1972, mainly to the Nigerian government. In 1950 the then keeper of ethnography, Herman Braunholtz, had told the trustees that of the 203 plaques acquired from the Foreign Office in 1898 about 30 were duplicates and surplus to the requirements of the collection.

The trustees authorised the sale of these items. Four were sold to a dealer for £1100 with the Museum receiving £876 after commission. Another 13 were sold to the Nigerian government for £1050 at an average price of £75. In England, unlike America, deaccession is unusual. Items that are unfashionable in one generation, may not be in later generations. .Financially, the sale was a disaster as the 23 items that were sold by the Dutch collector's estate in 1980 achieved £750,000 whereas the British Museum had sold 30 for a few thousand pounds just over a decade earlier.

In 1953 a law was passed in Nigeria placing all antiquities under government protection and defining antiquity as, 'any object or relic of early times before the advent of the white man.' When the Republic of Nigeria was formed in 1963 an edict stated that, 'These antiquities are the only authentic objects which illustrate and illuminate the course of our development. This is vital to us as a people as it enables us to establish our identity, and hence restores our dignity in the community of nations.'[24]

Nigeria's restitution claims wax and wane and items kept in Nigeria are rarely put on display. In 2002 the lower house of Nigeria's parliament made a formal resolution that Nigeria's President, Olusegun Obasanjo, should formally request the return of all the bronzes removed from Benin currently in the British Museum, but Lagos became distracted shortly afterwards with managing a huge oil boom, which has only recently begun to cool off.

The punitive raid enriched the British Museum with the best collection of Benin plaques in the world. The cost was: - the destruction of the state of Benin, the show trial of its king, the torching of the royal palace and much of Benin city, the execution of Benin's leading chiefs, the burning of villages, the slaughter of the local population and a resentment towards the English in

Nigeria that remains today. The legality of the whole punitive expedition is also questionable.

54-year-old Admiral Sir Harry Rawson had advanced with his men on foot often under fire. He had been at sea since he was 14 years old and suffered in the 100°F. The taking of Benin city proved his last battle. He retired and lived in the agreeable surroundings of Government House on the edge of Sydney harbour, where he held the post of Governor of New South Wales from 1902 to 1909. He encouraged Australia to develop her own navy and helped them draw up the plans for it.

At the end of his Australian posting the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported, ‘Everyone has recognized the qualities of unassuming good will, tact, and honesty of purpose that made Sir Harry Rawson’s period in office so successful. No section of the community does not recall some special occasion when his kindly help and interest have been forthcoming.’[25] Rawson returned to England aged 66 where the king honoured him with the GCMG. His last public appearance was at the Royal Naval Club on Trafalgar Day, 1910 and he died on 3 November that year. A bronze memorial in St Paul’s Cathedral dedicated to his memory simply reads:

> ‘This is the happy warrior - this is he Whom every man in arms would wish to be.’

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[1] Chamberlin, Russell, *Loot, the Heritage of Plunder,* Thames and Hudson, 1983, p. 199.

[2] Greenfield, Jeanette, *The Return of Cultural Treasures,* Cambridge, 2007, p. 94.

[3] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 71.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 77.

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 78.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 78.

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 79.

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 79.

[9] *Ibid.,* p. 82.

[10] *Ibid.,* p. 83.

[11] *Ibid.,* p. 83.

[12] *Ibid.,* p. 84.

[13] Lund, L. J., ‘The Happy Warrior, Admiral Sir Harry Rawson GCB’, *Naval Historical Review,* Naval Historical Society of Australia, p. 2.

[14] *Ibid.,* p. 2.

[15] *Ibid.,* p. 2.

[16] *Ibid.,* p. 3.

[17] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 192.

[18] *The British and the Benin Bronzes,* www.arm.arc.co.uk/britishBenin.html.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Gott, Richard, 'The Looting of Benin', *Independent Newspaper,* 22nd Feb 1997.

[21] Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 201.

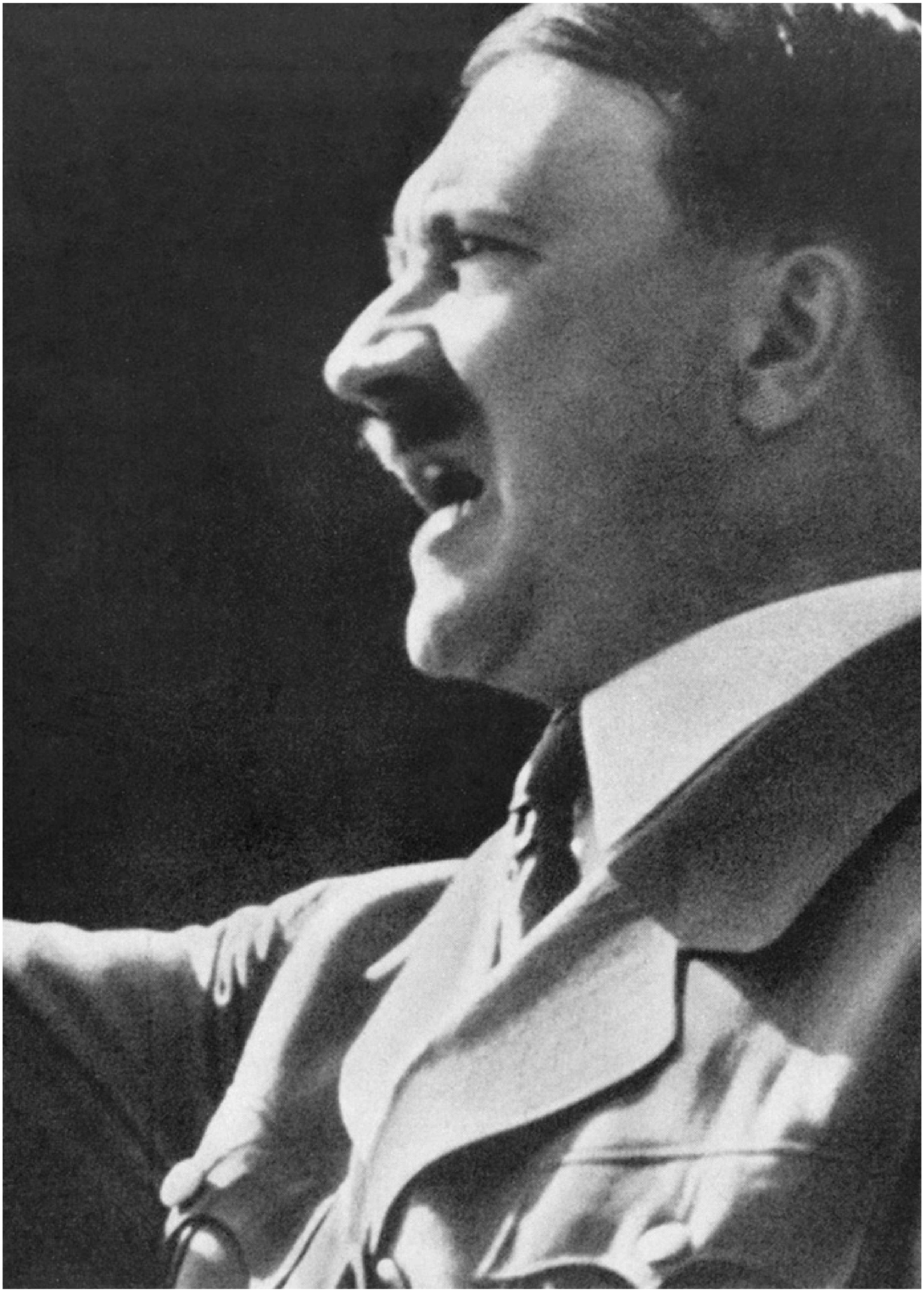
[22] *Ibid.,* p. 201.

[23] *Ibid.,* p. 204.

[24] *Ibid.,* p. 203.

[25] Obituary for Admiral Sir Harry Rawson, *The Times,* 4th November, 1910.

12 - World War II, Hitler, Goering and the other Nazi leaders



Adolf Hitler *c.* 1939.

> ‘A network of intrigues and dirty deals in which the most redoubtable leaders of National Socialism squabbled and defied each other in a sordid, stubborn struggle for the possession of famous paintings or valuable pieces of sculpture.’
>
> - Jean Cassou, a curator at the Louvre and member of the French Resistance, describing Nazi wartime collecting.[1]

There is paradox at the heart of the Third Reich that, whilst unleashing destruction and brutality not seen in Europe since the Thirty Years War, the Nazi elite became involved in culture and collecting art. Nazi commanders followed the lead of Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) who had made a living as an artist and considered himself an accomplished architect. The Nazi leadership sought to control the formulation of aesthetic policy and collected art to elevate their status and strengthen their domination over the occupied territories.

The destruction unleashed on Europe during the 12 years of the Third Reich (1933-1945), a military dictatorship under Hitler, and particularly during WWII (1939-1945), caused the death of 50-60 million people (estimate of the Imperial War Museum, London) 25 million of whom were Russians. The Nazis believed in the superiority of Aryan culture and adopted policies that involved resettling peoples of Germanic origin from countries including south Tyrol and Poland into Germany and the genocide of people that they viewed as inferior such as Jews, homosexuals, gypsies, communists and the disabled. The SS and Gestapo murdered 11 million people from these groups, including 6 million Jews.

The size of the Nazi art collections directly correlated with the status of the individual within the Nazi hierarchy. Hitler collected art for his intended Führermuseum in Linz, which was to be a glorious celebration of Nazi power and culture, and he stole and acquired 6755 paintings of which 5350 were old masters. He named this project Sonderaufrag Linz or Special Operation Linz. Hermann Goering, Hitler’s No. 2 and the second most powerful man in the Third Reich until he fell from favour in 1942 with the demise of his Luftwaffe, amassed the second largest collection with between 1700 and 2000 artworks mainly housed at his estate at Karinhall. Joachim von Ribbentrop, Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler and other important ministers all established smaller but still extensive collections.

The Safe Haven programme, established by the US Military in 1944 to try and repatriate stolen art, estimated that the Nazis stole over 20% of the entire art in Europe, with specially trained divisions of the SS accompanying the Wehrmacht through North Africa, Hungary, Russia, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland and France. They stole coins, jewellery, silver, gold, sculptures, paintings, drawings, books and antiquities. A 1969 report from the treasury (*Bundesschatzmeister*) of the Federal Republic noted that 20,083 artworks from the Nazi leadership had been given legal status and were now distributed between embassies, museums and other government offices in Germany.

The Nazis also emptied the treasuries of occupied territories of 558 tons of gold, Belgium losing 218 tons and Austria 106 tons. In 1945 the US army managed to recover 351 tons of gold hidden in bank vaults and salt mines. Germany started the war with 35 tons of her own reserves so 242 tons of European gold disappeared during the war. Some gold was sent to Bern and exchanged by the Swiss National Bank into 1.2 billion Swiss francs which were used by the Reich to pay for goods on the open market. Some just disappeared at the end of the war.

Hitler disliked spending gold and managed to force the Swiss to provide goods on credit until 1943. He developed his own Keynesian system, enlisting support from German industrialists and companies such as Gustav Krupp, Fritz Thyssen and I. G. Farben and launched a massive deficit spending programme while instigating price controls. He issued government bonds and credit notes and set Germany on a vast programme of rebuilding the armed forces and national infrastructure that could only lead to war. He intended to extract funds later from defeated counties, as had been done to Germany after WWI.

The Nazis had unlimited funds during the early days of the war and spent huge sums on building their art collections. Hitler spent RM164 million on art, at a time when the average wage in the Third Reich was RM150 per month. Sometimes he spent over RM1m on a picture such as Vermeer’s *An Artist in his Studio*, for which he gave Count Czernin RM1.4m. This was a third of what Czernin had been offered and refused prior to the war but still a large sum. Other Nazi leaders also had considerable resources available to spend on art.

Hitler used ‘divide and rule’ to control his leadership and an examination of the Nazi looting machine throws up a web of overlapping organisations, with differing spheres of influence, through which the Nazi leadership sought to enrich themselves and build up collections. The Nazi leadership, with the exception of Goering during a brief period between 1940 and 1942, never overrode Hitler's right to the first choice of the artworks but the remaining artworks were distributed in a fierce free-for-all.

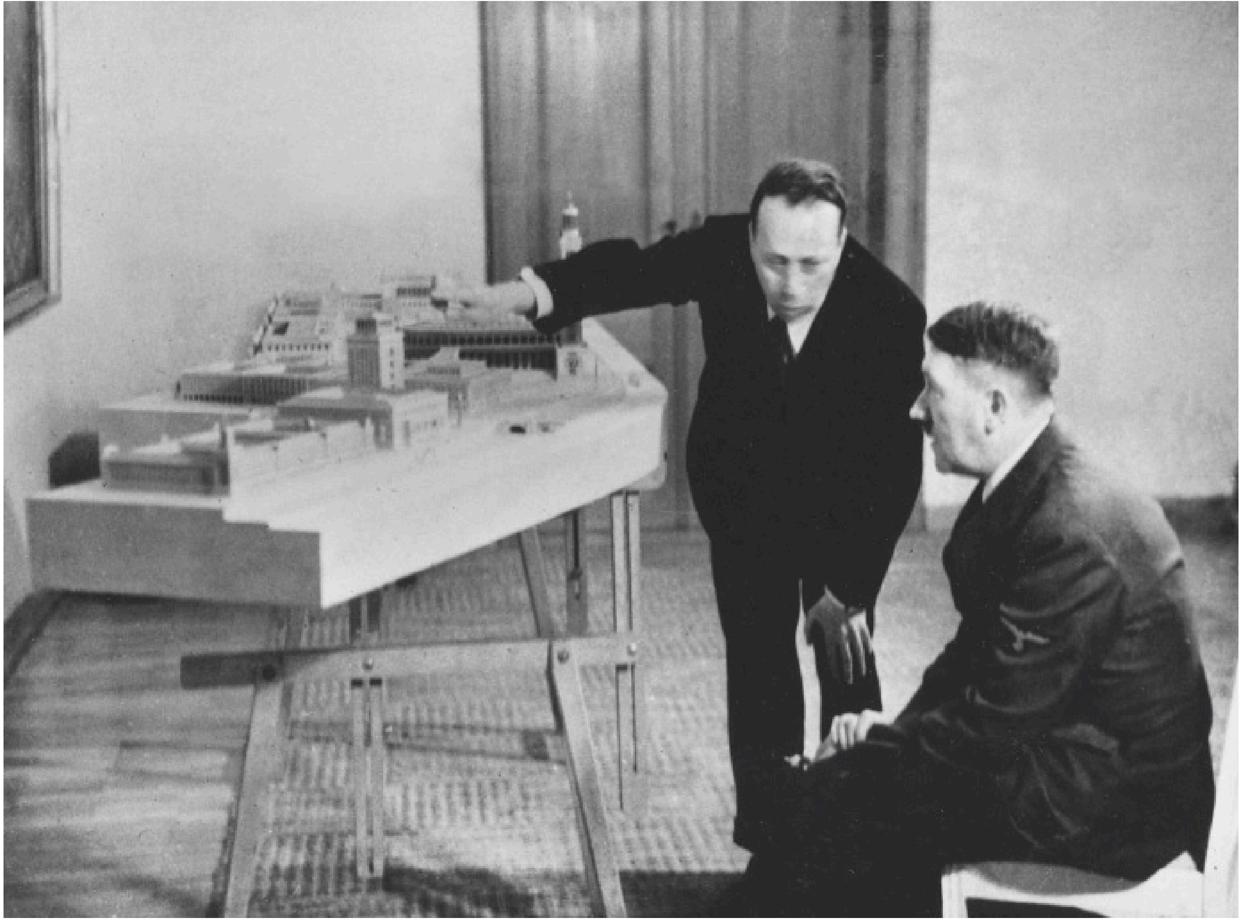
Adolf Hitler (1888-1945) raises a defiant, clenched fist during a speech.(c. 1939).

Hitler's personal taste in art inclined towards the nineteenth-century Austro-Bavarian school and old masters, particularly the great German artists of the Renaissance such as Dürer and Cranach. He purged German museums of art by Jewish artists and modern art, which he perceived to be degenerate. Goebbels issued a decree on 30th June 1937 that instructed his men to remove degenerate art from German museums for an exhibition of 730 works by 112 artists that opened in Munich on 19th July.

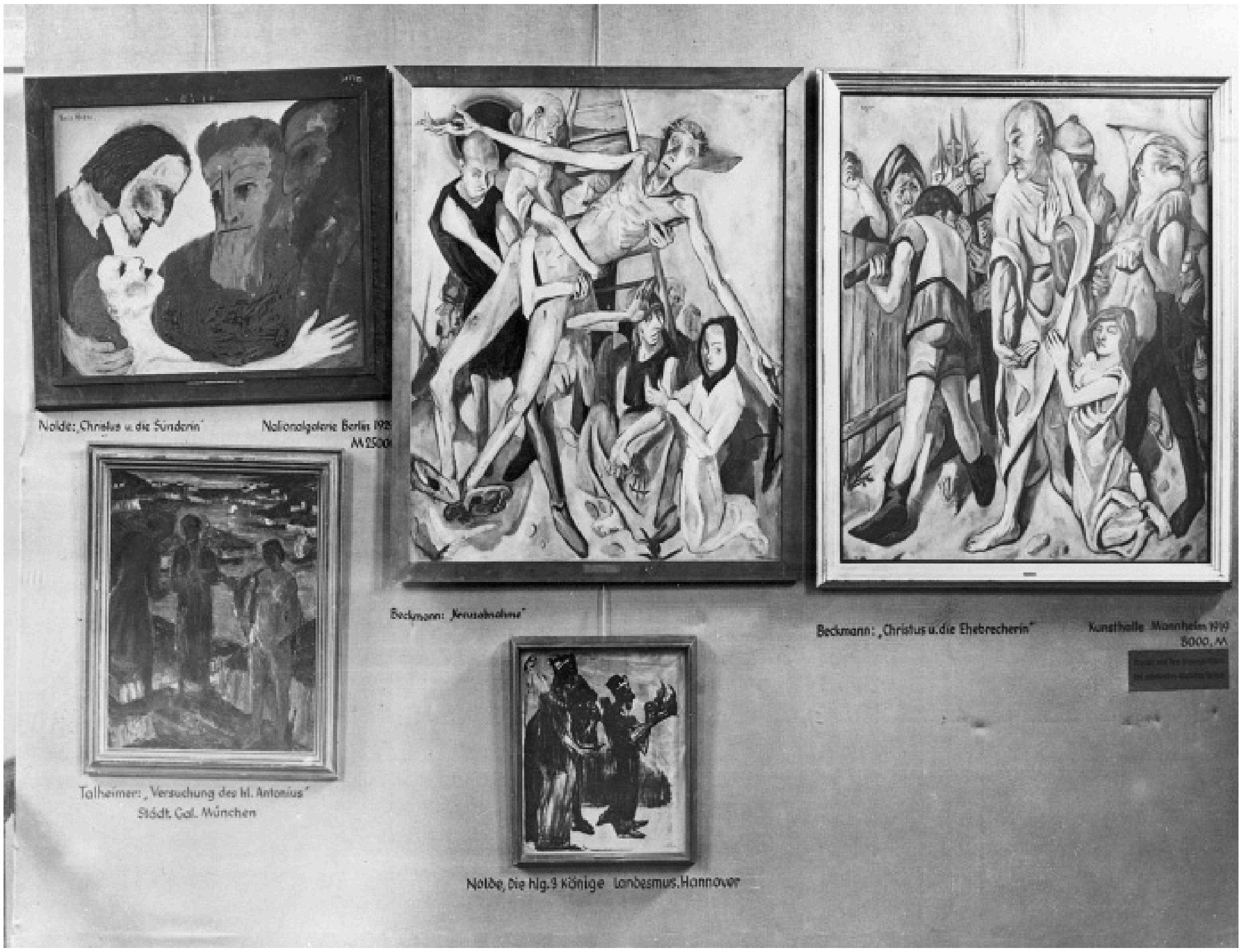
The idea of the exhibition, named *Entartete Kunst*, was to show the depravity of this style of art. However, the exhibition was attended by a record 2,009,899 people and had attracted over 3 million by the time it had circulated around Germany and Austria. Another exhibition of Nazi-approved art of the period managed to attract only 400,000 visitors.

Goebbels established the Ziegler Commission to oversee the removal of artworks from German museums and soldiers removed 17,000 works. Over 1100 were taken from museums in Berlin and 900 from the Hamburg Kunsthalle. German expressionist painters such as Emil Nolde, Max Beckmann, Otto Dix and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff suffered badly with Nolde having the most removed with 1,052 works. Paintings by Gauguin, Picasso, Franz Marc, Lovis Corinth and Paul Klee were also taken down. It was with these purged *Entartete Kunst* that the Nazis started their illegal art activities. These paintings belonged to the German people and had been added to museum holdings by gift from the artists or acquisition on the open market and there was no basis in law for their removal just because the Führer deemed them offensive.

The Nazis started selling the works secretly through art dealers like Karl Haberstock, Karl Meder and Max Tauber, then offered some at public auction in Switzerland before finally burning a large number of them.



Adolf Hitler and the architect Hermann Gisler (1898-1987) with the model of the buildings for the Führerstadt, Linz, on the Danube. (Photo possibly 1944).

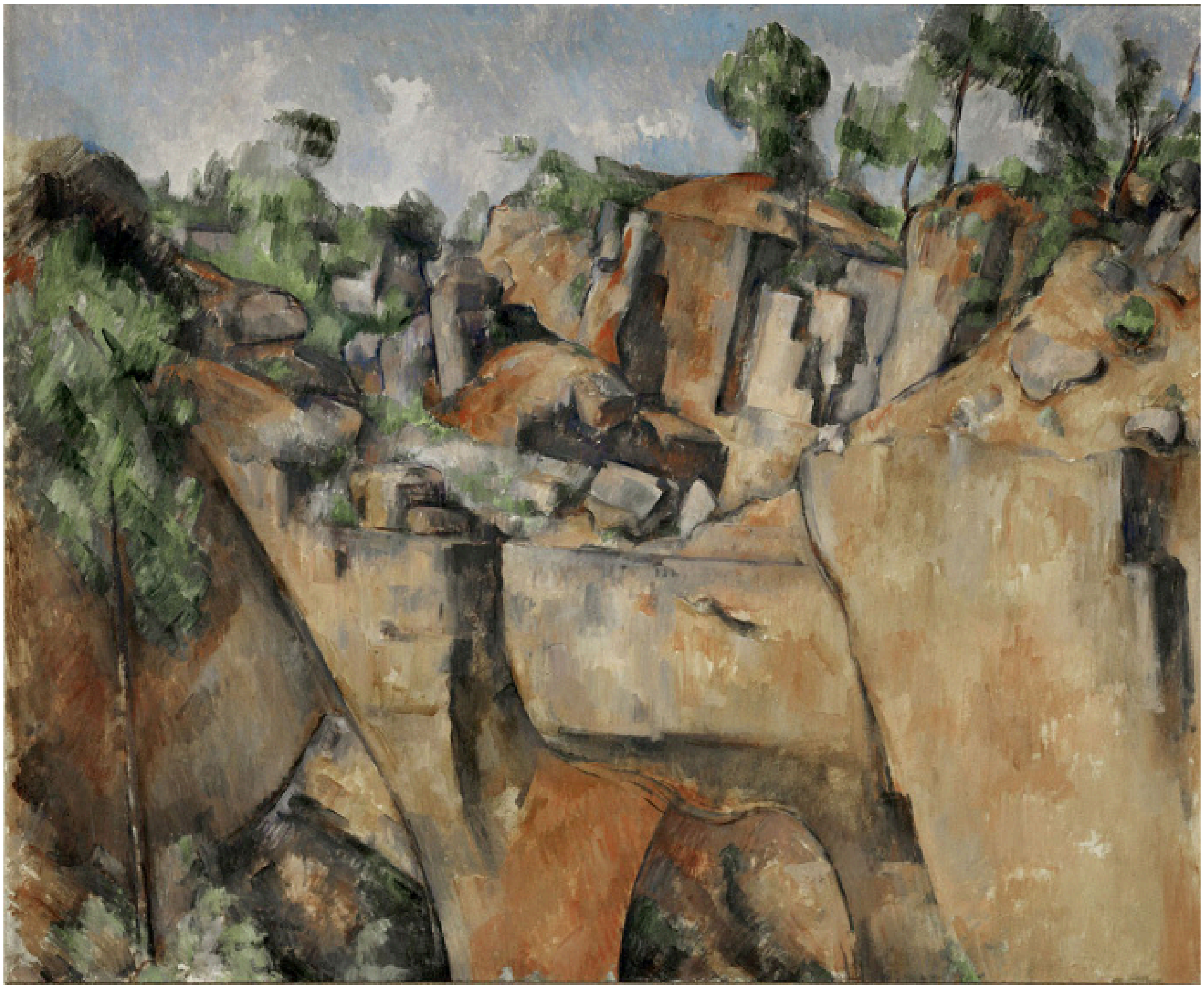

Nolde: „Christus u. die Sünderin"
Nationalgalerie Berlin 1925
M 25000
Beckmann: „Kreuzabnahme"
Beckmann: „Christus u. die Ehebrecherin"
Kunsthalle Mannheim 1919
5000,M
Talheimer: „Versuchung des hl. Antonius"
Städt. Gal. München
Nolde, Die hlg. 3 Könige Landesmus. Hannover

Exhibition of 'degenerate art' (*entartete Kunst*) at the Hofgarten gallery in Munich (opened July, 1937). Above and below, left to right, the following works can be seen: *Christ and the Sinner* by Emil Nolde; *Deposition*, and *Christ and the adulterous Woman* by Max Beckmann; *The Temptation of St Anthony* by Thalheimer; *The Three Kings* by Emil Nolde.

Various art dealers such as Wildenstein and Seligman in Paris, Colnaghi in London and Fides in Zurich tried unsuccessfully to buy the entire collection. With Goebbels' assistance, Goering removed 13 paintings from the Kopenickerstrasse warehouse in early 1938, including works by Van Gogh and Cézanne. Using the dealer Sepp Angerer to front for him, Goering sold Van Gogh's *Dr Gachet* and *Garden at Daubigny* and Cézanne's *The Quarry* to the Amsterdam banker Franz Koenig who paid 12,000 English pounds and RM800,000. Koenig had no qualms about buying looted art but he fell under a train in 1941 at Cologne station. It is believed he was murdered by the Nazis so that they could expropriate his collection of old master drawings. His collection passed to the Dutch collector Van Beuningen, who sold it to Hans Posse for the Hitler museum before it was looted by the Soviets. The collection is today in the Pushkin Museum in

Moscow, who denied having it until the mid 1990s when they stared exhibiting parts of it. Angerer then disposed of the ten remaining pictures around Europe selling a Munch and Signac in Sweden and exchanging two other Munchs in London for foreign currency. Goering gave him RM15,000 for executing the deal.

Goering used some of the profits to add to his collection at his country estate Karinhall, tasking Angerer with buying six tapestries in Italy for 400,000 lire. He also bought a Lucas Cranach *Nymph at the Spring* from Karl Haberstock and arranged for part of his profit to finance Angerer's buying of eight tapestries after Albert Auwerx's *Gothic Myths* as a gift for Hitler. Goering made promises to Goebbels that he would fully indemnify the museums in question for their losses, and he did make some payments, but only for a fraction of the worth of the pictures. Goering's files and records as Ministerprasident of Prussia reveal that he paid RM100,000 to the Folkwang Museum in Essen as compensation for their loss of Cézanne's *The Quarry* and RM150,000 to the Frankfurt Stadtische Galerie for Van Gogh's *Dr Gachet*.



Paul Cézanne, *La carrière de Bibemus* (*the quarry of Bibemus*), 1898/1900. Sold by Goering in 1938 using the dealer Sepp Angerer.

Selling degenerate art continued until 1942 and raised slightly over RM1m of which CHF570,940 was from an auction held at Galerie Fischer in Lausanne in June 1939. A fraction was given to the German museums that had lost the art, with the Nationalgalerie in Berlin receiving around one-sixth of its total losses, and the remainder was placed in a bank account in London, one of the many sources Hitler used to fund his art acquisitions. Goebbels noted piously that, 'this compensation (to the museums) is not founded on legal obligation, but comes exclusively from reasons of fairness.'[2]

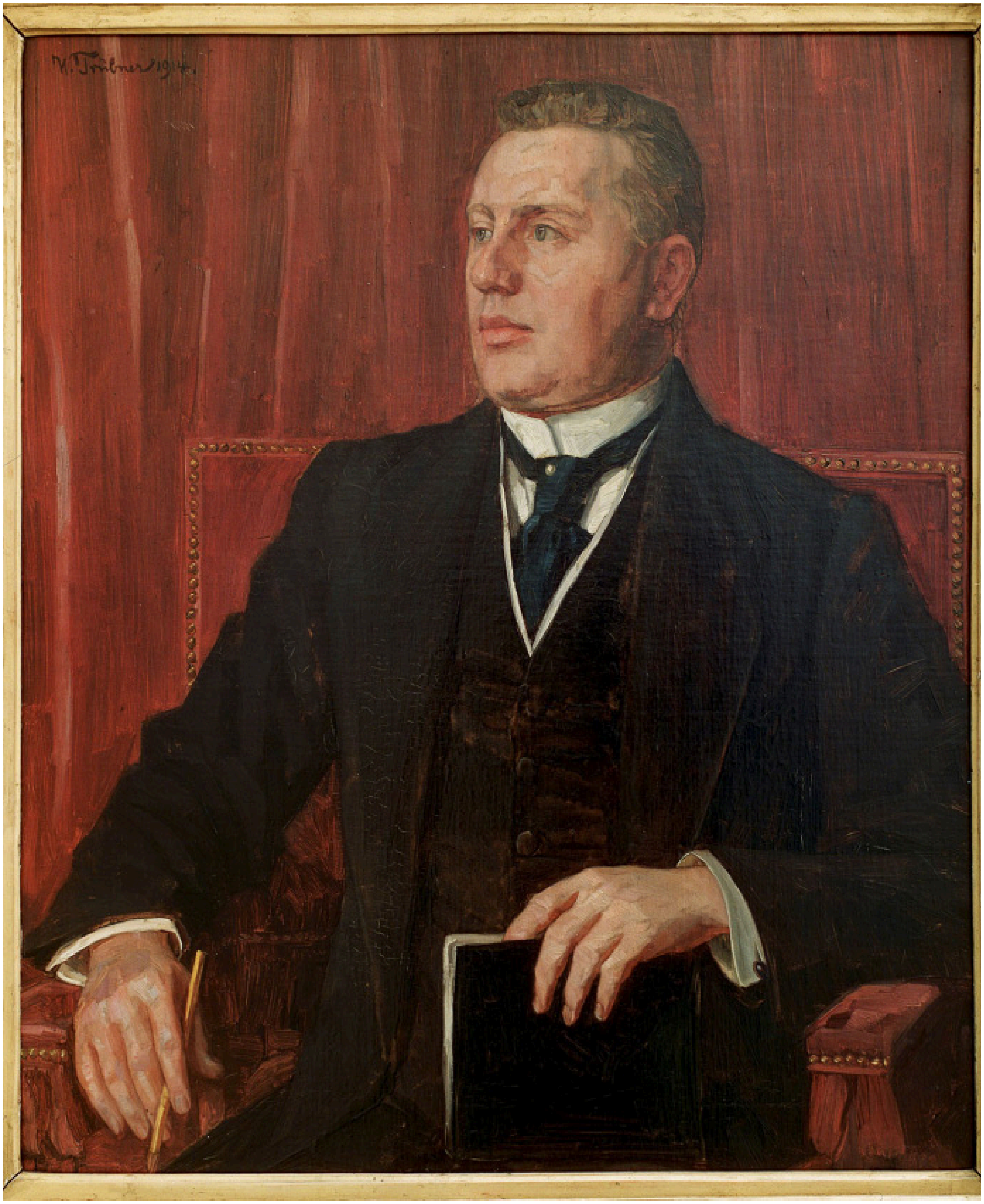
Fischer was deemed a suitable outlet for this art as he was Aryan, but the sale was a disappointment for the Nazis. The 125 pieces of art were shown in Zurich from 17th-27th May before being auctioned in Lausanne on 30th June. The Munich Van Gogh *self portrait* made CHF 175,000 against an estimate of 145,000, and Picasso's *Two Harlequins* made CHF 80,000 against an estimate of 52,000, but most pieces sold for under estimate and 38 lots remained unsold, including Picasso's *Head of a Woman* and *The Absinthe Drinker*. Most of the artists represented in the sale, such as Franz Marc, Picasso, Gauguin, Oskar Kokoschka, Max Beckmann, Paul Klee and Van Gogh, are today considered among the twentieth-century's finest.

Another smaller sale with 30 of the unsold works plus another 11 pictures followed at Fischer's at the end of August 1939 just before the outbreak of war, but was equally disappointing. Fischer believed a cabal of dealers destroyed the sales, but it is likely that both dealers and collectors were worried by the illegality of the sale and the impending war. By February 1939 there were 12,167 works left in the Berlin warehouses and Goebbels considered plans to burn them. They decided to burn 4,829 works (1,004 paintings and 3,825 drawings) and these were incinerated in a secret bonfire on 20th March in the courtyard outside Berlin's main firehouse. The remaining items remained in storage until the end of the war. In his closing report to Hitler on 4th July Goebbels calculated that 300 paintings and 3,000 works of graphic art had been sold abroad and these sales had brought in Swiss, English, American and French currency as well as some valuable pieces in exchange.

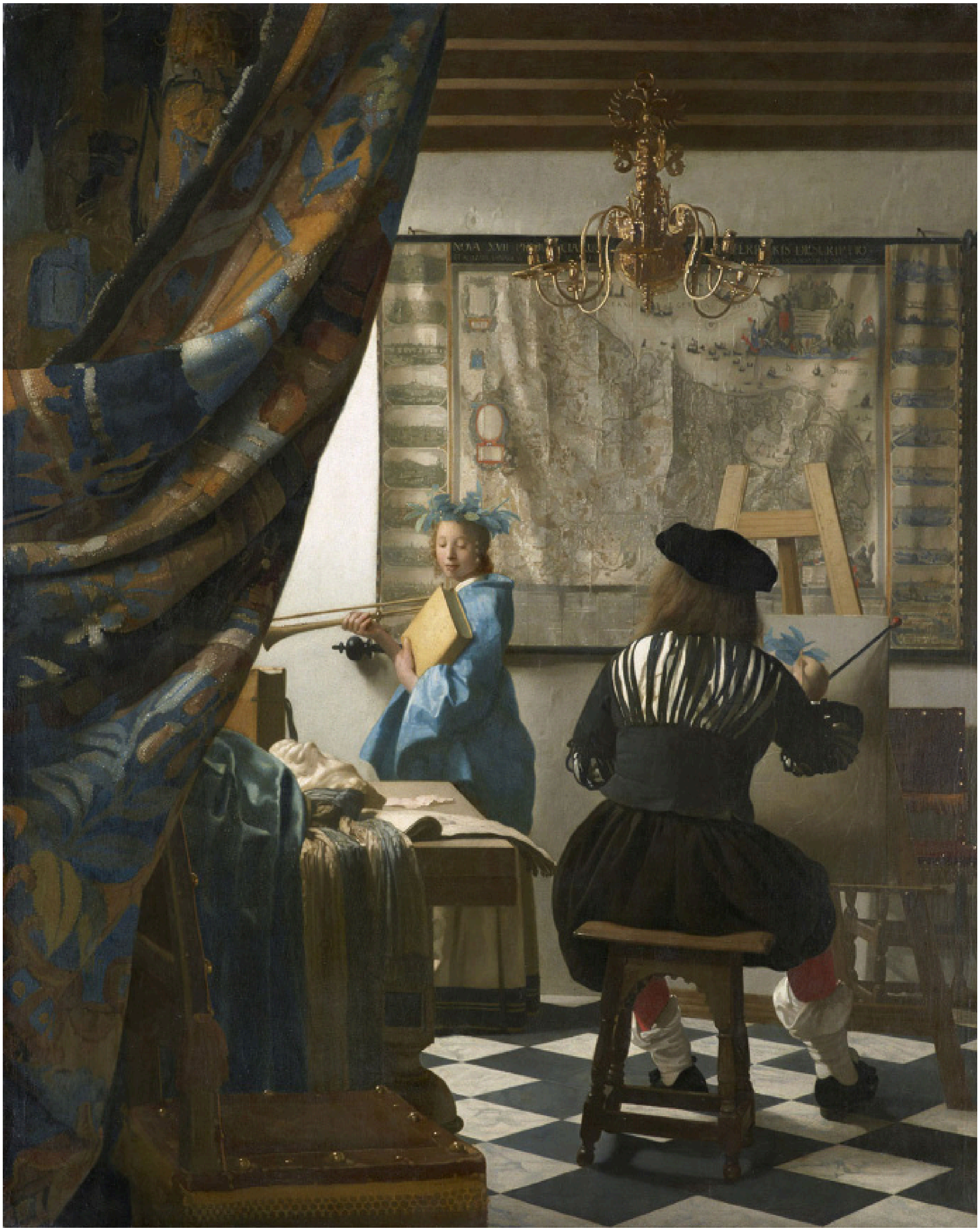
13 January 1938: Field-Marshal Hermann Goering admires a painting given to him by Adolf Hitler (right) for his 45th birthday.

In March 1938 Hitler marched into Austria, instigating the Anschluss whereby Austria was annexed as part of Germany, where it remained until 1945. It was in Austria that the Nazis first started experimenting with policies regarding artworks from occupied countries and the confiscation of Jewish-owned art. Baron Louis de Rothschild, the richest man in Austria and possessor of over 1,000 paintings including works by Rembrandt and Boucher, was the first high-profile victim. The Rothschild homes were searched in March, including the Baron's lavish Viennese townhouse on the Theresianumgasse, and the Baron was denied exit from the country and arrested at Aspern airport. He was imprisoned in the Gestapo headquarters at the Hotel Metropol for nine months before he agreed to sign over his art collection in return for his brothers' release from Dachau and their safe passage out of Austria.

An order of 26th April 1938 required Jews to submit a list of all their possessions except household items and personal goods and by January 1939 Himmler reported to the Reich Chancellery that RM60-70m worth of art had been confiscated from Vienna’s 300,000 Jews and was being stored at the Rothschilds’ hunting retreat at Waidhofen and at the Neue Hofburg palace in Vienna. In June 1939 Hitler travelled to Vienna, inspected the confiscated artworks and instigated the policy known as Führer Vorbehalt (reservation for Hitler) whereby he reserved first right for himself on all art removed from Austria and later from the entire occupied territories.


W. Trübner 1914.

Karl Haberstock , Berlin Art dealer, counted among his customers almost all important Nazi leaders. In 1938, he helped confiscation of Jewish art collections in Vienna and in the following years he collaborated closely with the 'Special Mission Linz.'



***An Artist in his Studio* (*c.* 1665-66) by Jan Vermeer (1632-75).**

The dealer Karl Haberstock was sent to look over the looted artworks and reported back that he had found 36 works by Rubens, 18 by Titian and

20 by Lucas Cranach. However, as a civilian Haberstock found it difficult to manoeuvre within the Nazi war machine and Hitler replaced him on 26th June 1939 with Dr Hans Posse, the former director of the Dresden Gemaldegalerie who then collected works for Hitler's intended Führermuseum. Posse selected 122 works and sent them to the Führerbau in Munich, an underground depository where items were catalogued, photographed and the photographs placed in leather-bound volumes before being sent to Hitler. Hitler took these volumes with him wherever he travelled and spent hours flicking through them. The volumes were later used by the tribunals at the Nuremberg trials. Posse also selected a further 324 paintings from the 1500 works taken from the collection of Oscar Bondy. Vermeer's *An Artist in his Studio* was coerced from Count Czernin in Vienna for RM1.4m although the Count had been offered and declined US$6m before the war from Andrew Mellon. Jewish confiscations started simultaneously in Germany. Under decrees in 1938 and 1939 Jews were forbidden from trading and entering theatres, museums or attending cultural events and had to pay a fine of 20% of the assets they had declared in the April 1938 inventory.

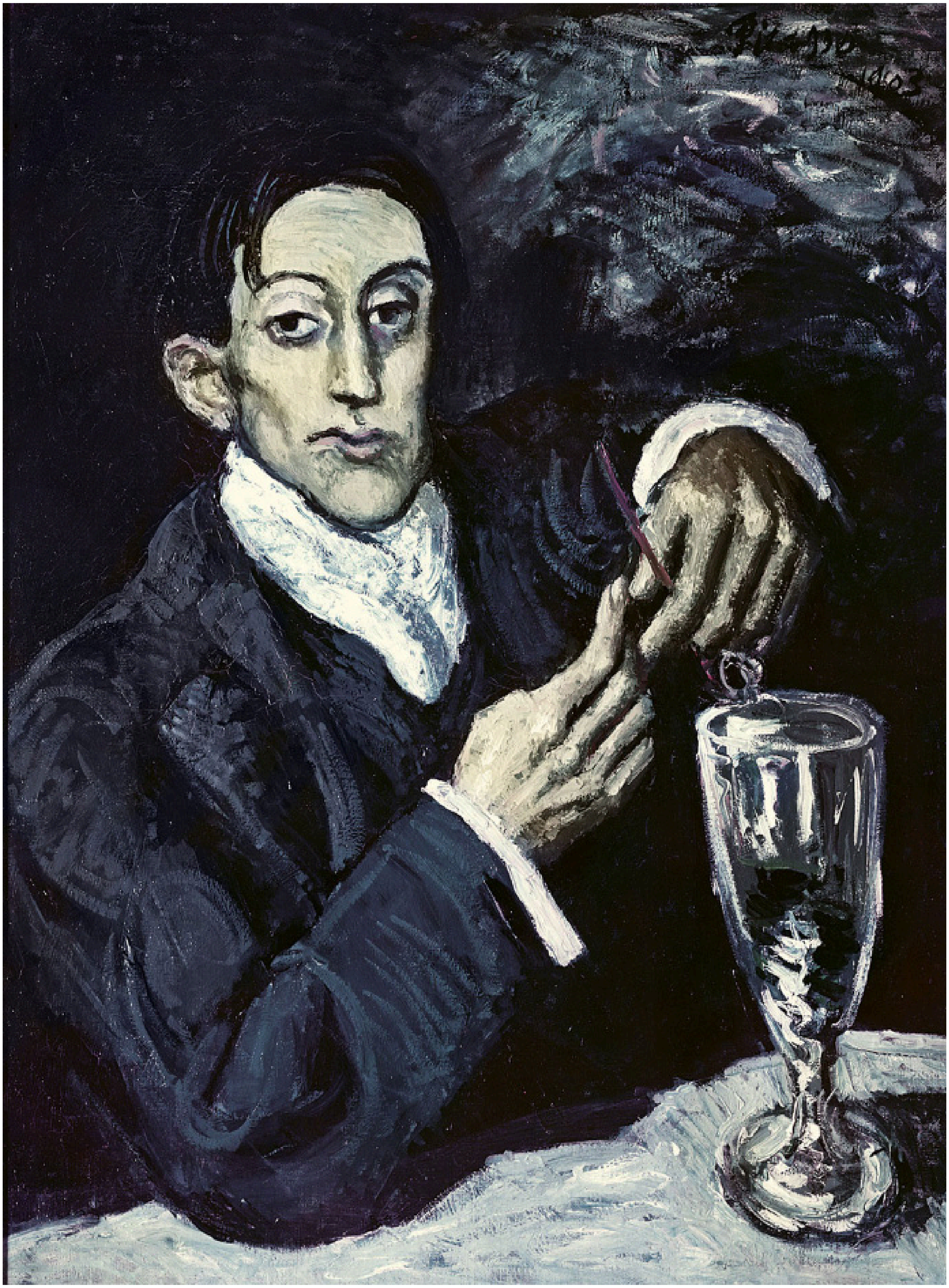
Hitler maintained control over the Linz project, but the daily running of it was handled by Martin Bormann, his brutal and thuggish private secretary, to whom Posse answered. Posse came up against competition from other Nazi looters and had to enlist the help of Bormann. One such famous artwork was Pieter Brueghel's *The Hay Harvest* from the Lobkowitz collection at Radnitz castle in Czechoslovakia where Posse had to compete with the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin. Bormann wrote to the other parties concerned, who backed off, allowing Posse to secure the painting. The Brueghel is one of a set of seasons with the others being in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. It is the last remaining Brueghel the Elder in private hands. The Lobkowitz collection of around 3,000 paintings is the largest in Eastern Europe.

In Austria, and later in France and the Netherlands, the Nazis only looted Jewish collections and took items from national museums that had previously been in Germany or were by German artists. The Nazis looted items from Czech Jewish collections and museums. They stripped the National Museum in Prague castle and removed the Prague University library. They emptied the palace of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and took the Lobkowitz collection. The looted paintings were returned to the National

Museum in Prague after the war and remained there until restored to the Lobkowitz family in the early 1990s and are now kept at Nelahozeves castle outside Prague.

In autumn 1939 the Wehrmacht invaded Poland, which provided a testing ground for the savage policies of the Third Reich. The Nazis viewed the Austrians as Germanic, but they believed all the Slavic nations were a sub-species and treated them accordingly. Hitler ordered that the, 'Polish upper crust' be liquidated and instructed Himmler to draw up plans to eradicate Polish culture. Goering removed 31 drawings by Albrecht Dürer from the Bawarowski Museum in Lvov and sent them to Hitler whilst forming an organisation under Kajetan Mühlmann to loot its way through Poland. Goering also formed an alliance with Hans Frank who Hitler had appointed Reichsleiter and Governor General of Poland.

Muhlmann operated two groups out of Warsaw and Cracow and they looted private collections, churches, universities and state museums, having major successes with the private collections of Count Adam Potocki, Count Branicki, Prince Czartoryski and the museums at Cracow, Warsaw and Cracow Cathedral. Despite Goering and Frank's loose partnership, some of the treasures were not easily allocated and Muhlmann later described the fight between the two over Leonardo's *Lady with an Ermine* from the Czartoryski collection in Cracow, which he had to take, 'at least twice' between Cracow and Berlin before Frank won it. The Leonardo was recovered at the end of the war at Frank's Bavarian retreat.

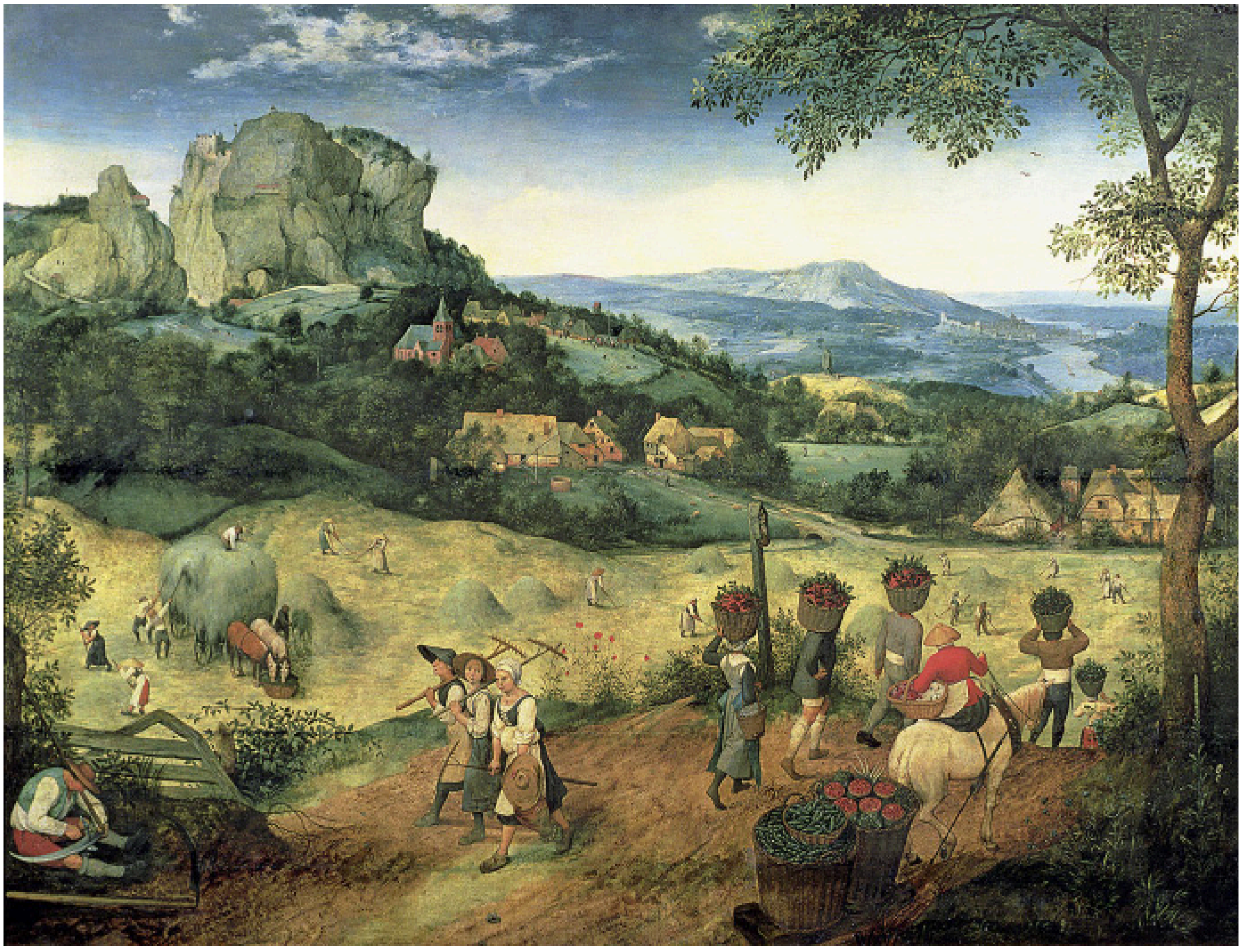

Picasso 1903

***The Absinthe Drinker*: (Portrait of Angel Fernandez de Soto, 1903) by Pablo Picasso (1881-1973).**

Whilst Goering and Frank operated an uneasy alliance for control of the looted artworks, Himmler looted through the Gestapo and the Ahnenerbe, a bizarre think tank that he had formed in 1935 to promote the anthropological and cultural history of the German race. Hitler gave orders to repatriate anything of Germanic origin that was found in Poland. One of Himmler's squads seized 1100 paintings and 25 sculptures as well as coins, weapons, porcelain and Egyptian artefacts from three picture galleries, 15 museums and 74 castles.

Hans Posse, who travelled to Poland in 1939, looking for items for the Führermuseum, reported to Martin Bormann, head of the Party Chancellery, that:

> Except for those artworks of top quality already known to us in Germany (e.g. the Veit Stoss altar, panels by Hans von Kalmbach from St Mary's Basilica, Cracow, the Raphael, Leonardo, and Rembrandt in the Czartoryski collection) and a few works from the National Museum in Warsaw, there is not very much here for an enrichment of German possessions in the high arts (painting and sculpture).[3]



***Haymaking*, from a series of paintings of the Four Seasons, (1565) by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c.1525-69)**

The *Veit Stoss altarpiece* had been carved by the German artist Veit Stoss within the confines of the St Mary's Basilica, Cracow. Foreseeing Nazi interest, the Poles dismantled it and hid it at different locations around Poland, but the Nazis found it and removed it to Germany. The Leonardo mentioned by Posse was the *Lady with an Ermine* which was recovered, but the Raphael *Portrait of a Young Man* disappeared during the war and has never been seen again.

The National Museum in Cracow lost a *Venetian Palace* by Francesco Guardi and a *Christ Carrying the Cross* by Rubens. Twenty-five of Bellotto's famous views of Warsaw were removed from Warsaw's royal castle, along with floors and wall panelling, which were ripped out and later installed in the Zwinger Palace in Dresden. In addition to the Leonardo and Raphael the Czartoryski collection in Cracow also lost works by Dürer, Lucas van Leyden and Rembrandt's *Landscape with the Good Samaritan*. Muhlmann secured Watteau's *The Pretty Polish Girl*, which he sent as a gift to Goering and Hans Frank filled his palatial new residences, the castles at

Cracow and Kressendorf, with such treasures as Rembrandt's *Portrait of a Young Man* taken from the Lazienski collection.

Polish losses were huge, including a total of 13,512 paintings and 1,379 sculptures as well as antique furniture, books, coins, porcelain and tapestries. Antique porcelain was used for eating off before being smashed, tapestries were torn up for bedding and statues utilised for target practice. The regular army, the Wehrmacht, was horrified by the looting and tried unsuccessfully to stop it. However, Polish artistic losses pale into insignificance compared to the human cost of the invasion which totalled 6 million dead (including 3 million Jews), amounting to 20% of the population.

In the Baltic States the Germans were less vicious, but their aim of removing the Jews and other 'undesirables' and the Germanisation of the remaining population was the same. In September 1939 they ceded most of the Baltic States to the Soviet Union in return for the safe migration of Baltic Germans into the new territory of the Third Reich in Western Poland. Initially 470,000 'racial Germans' were moved westwards, with more to follow later. Himmler tasked Dr Niels von Holst with negotiating with the Soviets for the return of Germanic artworks. Holst came up against the intransigence of the Baltic States and then the Soviets, who negotiated from October 1939 until June 1941. Discussions were held at the highest level between Ambassador F. W. von den Schulenburg and the Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, with Molotov inviting Holst to tour Leningrad and Moscow to see what items of Germanic origin those museums held but the talks came to nothing.

Invasion of the Low Countries and France in June 1940 gave the Nazis access to some of the richest treasure houses of Europe. On 16th May 1940, the day after the Netherlands surrendered, Mühlmann established his looting operation, the Dienststelle Mühlmann in The Hague under the direct authority of the Reichskommissar of the Netherlands, Dr Arthur Seyss-Inquart. Over the following 12 months Mühlmann removed works by Canaletto, Rembrandt and Rubens for the Führermuseum.

Posse arrived at The Hague 2 months later and established himself as Referent für Sonderfragen (Advisor on Special Questions). Most of the artworks removed in the Netherlands were quasi-legally gained through acquisition but often at low prices. Dealers, agents and informers appeared and German interest, particularly in German artworks, led to a booming art market and rapidly escalating prices. The collection of Fritz Mannheimer, a sworn enemy of Nazism, which Mannheimer kept at his two residences on Amsterdam's Hobbemastraat and Chateau Monte Cristo at Vaucresson near Paris, eluded the Nazis for a while.

The Nazis managed to bankrupt Mannheimer's bank, Mendelssohn and Co, on 9th August 1939. Mannheimer left for France and died mysteriously the same day, probably murdered by the Nazis. The collection contained works by Vermeer, Rembrandt, Chardin, Guardi, Canaletto, Fragonard and Watteau. His assets in the Netherlands were frozen and Posse acquired the Dutch part of the collection for FL 5.5m, which included Rembrandt's Jewish Doctor. The rest was moved by Mannheimer's widow to a temporary refuge in the unoccupied zone of Vichy just before the German invasion of France in June 1940. Theoretically it was off-limits to the Germans here, but Hitler later managed to secure it for FF 15m in May 1944.

Hans Frank (1900-1946), German lawyer and politician. From 1939 he was Governor General of Poland, and responsible for the Nazis' brutal occupation policy.

Belgium lost her greatest treasure, the altarpiece entitled *The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* in the cathedral of Ghent, more normally known simply as the *Ghent Altarpiece*, which was painted by the van Eyck brothers in 1432. The panels had first been removed in the sixteenth century when they were hidden during a period of Protestant rule in Ghent. Then Napoleon removed the four central panels and placed them in the Louvre before the allies sent them back to Ghent in accordance with the terms of the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Six of the twelve panels were sold by the vicar general of Ghent to King Frederick William III of Prussia who donated them to the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin.

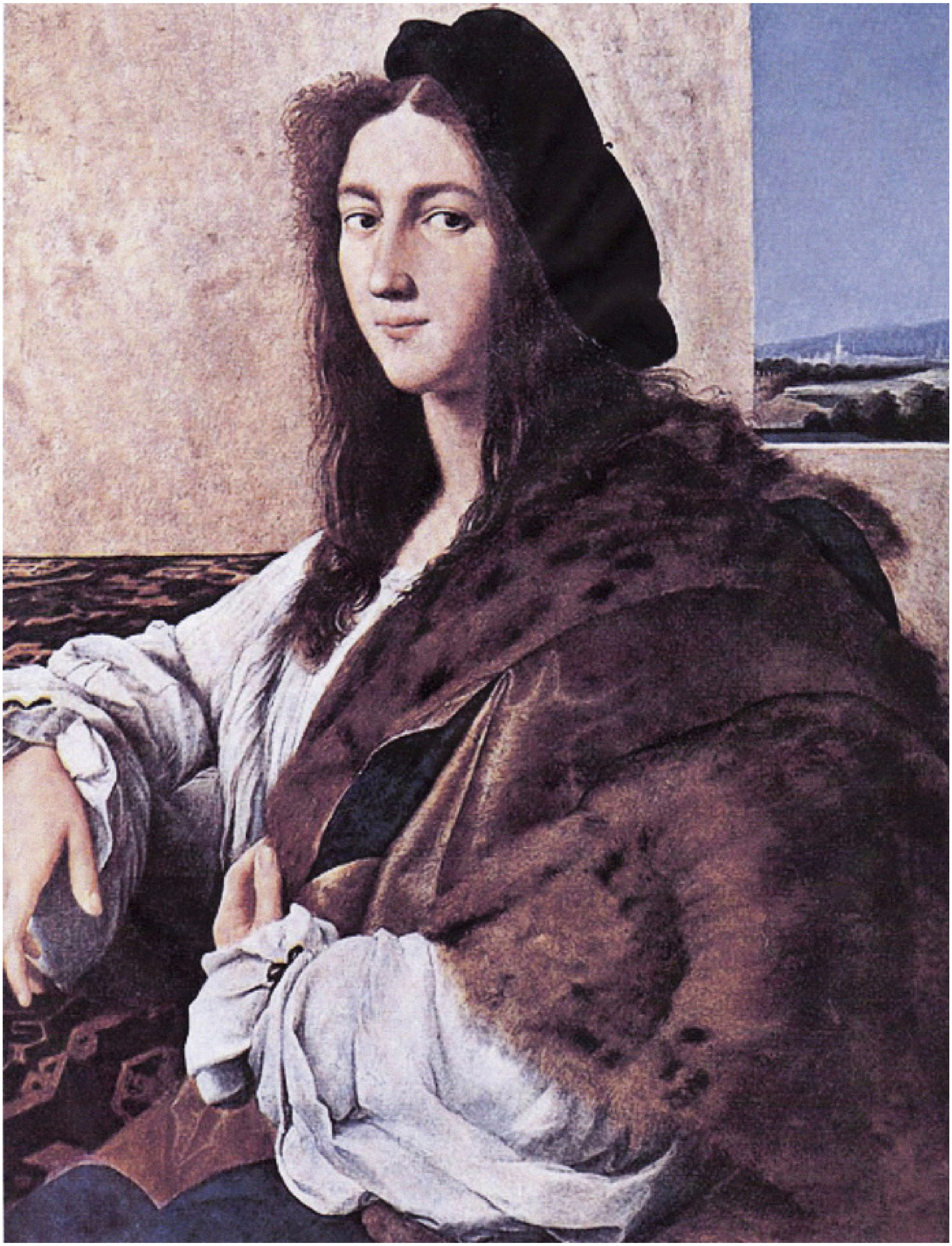
The remaining panels were hidden in Ghent during WWI when the Germans were told they had been sent for safekeeping to Britain. After WWI, when the altarpiece was reassembled, the six pieces were also returned from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, although they had been purchased legally by Frederick William. In 1930 one of the panels was stolen and has never been recovered. Belgian police did catch the thief but he died of a heart attack during questioning before he had revealed the location of the panel.

After the outbreak of WWII the altarpiece was moved into storage in Pau in the Pyrenees, under the control of the Vichy government and theoretically outside of Hitler's jurisdiction. The French gave a written agreement that the panels could not be moved without the written authorisation from the Mayor of Ghent and initially the Vichy government under Marshal Philippe Petain resisted German demands. However, the collaborationist Prime Minister Pierre Laval gave in to the Nazis, and the panels were secretly removed on 3rd August 1942 and taken with an armed escort back to Germany. They were finally recovered by the US army at the Alt Aussee salt mine in Austria in 1945, where they were nearly dynamited by the retreating Nazis. The altarpiece was returned to Ghent in 1945.

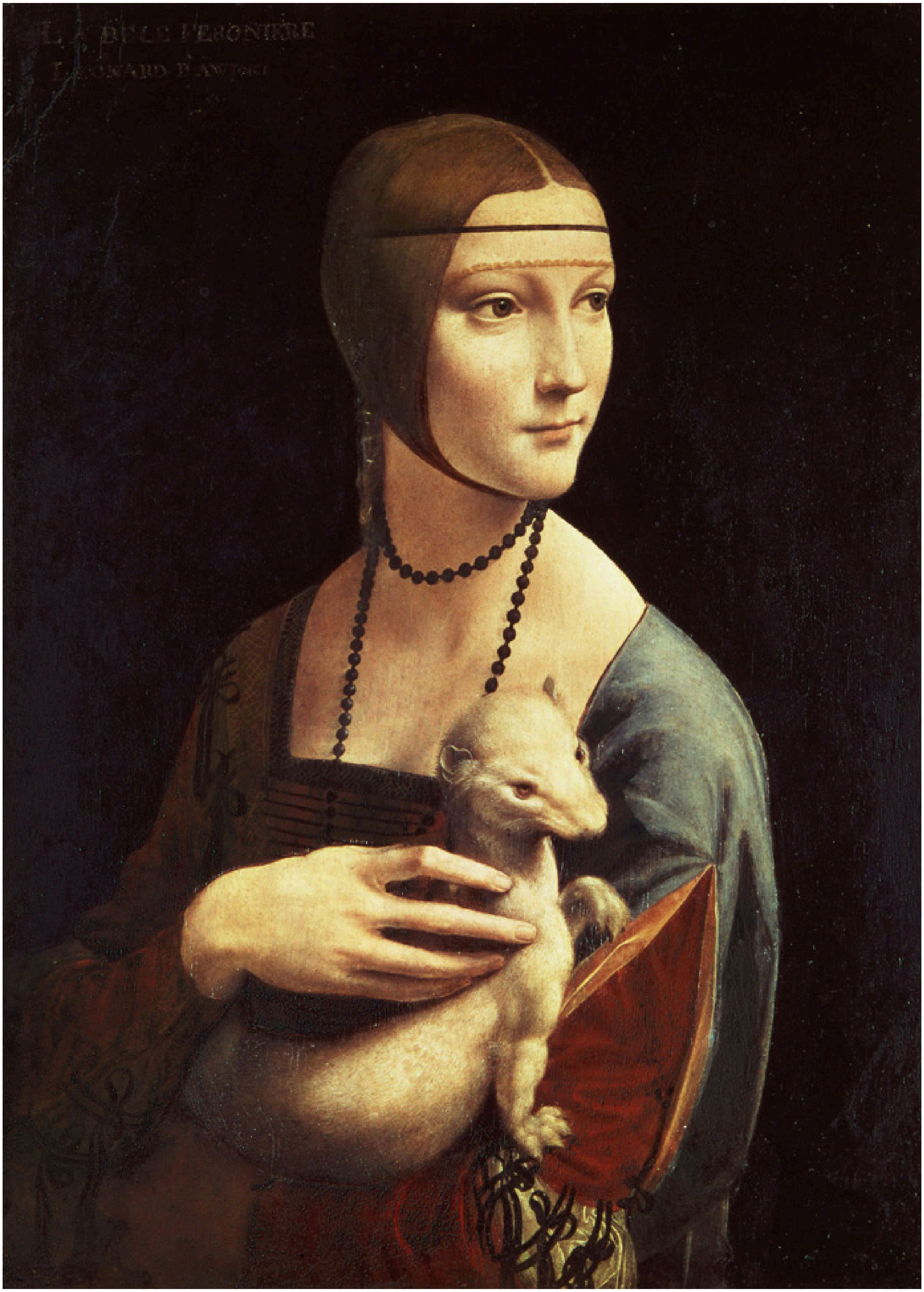
It was in France that Germany was most successful in its looting. When war broke out in September 1939, Paris was the centre of the art market with an extensive network of museums, auction houses and private dealerships. After the unexpected capitulation of the French army in June 1940, Hitler and the Nazis found themselves in control of a huge pile of potential war booty. By the time of the liberation of Paris in August 1944 one-third of all the art in private hands had been looted and tens of thousands of paintings remain missing to this day.

On 30th June 1940 Generalfeldmarshall Wilhelm Keitel, Chief of Staff for the German Armed Forces decreed that all publicly and privately owned collections and works of art were to be listed and fall under Nazi protection. On 17th September he decreed that all art sales after 1 September 1939 were null and void and that German authorities were free to confiscate Jewish-owned art collections. Hitler intended to remove what he wanted from French museums later by treaty once the war had been won. However, the removal of works of German origin started immediately.

This desire to repatriate German artworks was inspired by a report commissioned by Martin Bormann and Goebbels from the eminent art historian Otto Kummel which came to be known as the Kummel Report. Kummel constructed an exhaustive list of German art held in foreign countries as far back as the sixteenth century. Published in three volumes the report outlined the exact circumstances surrounding each work of art's removal from Germany, including its place of origin, current location, date of disappearance and an estimate of its current value. It divided the items into three categories of importance.



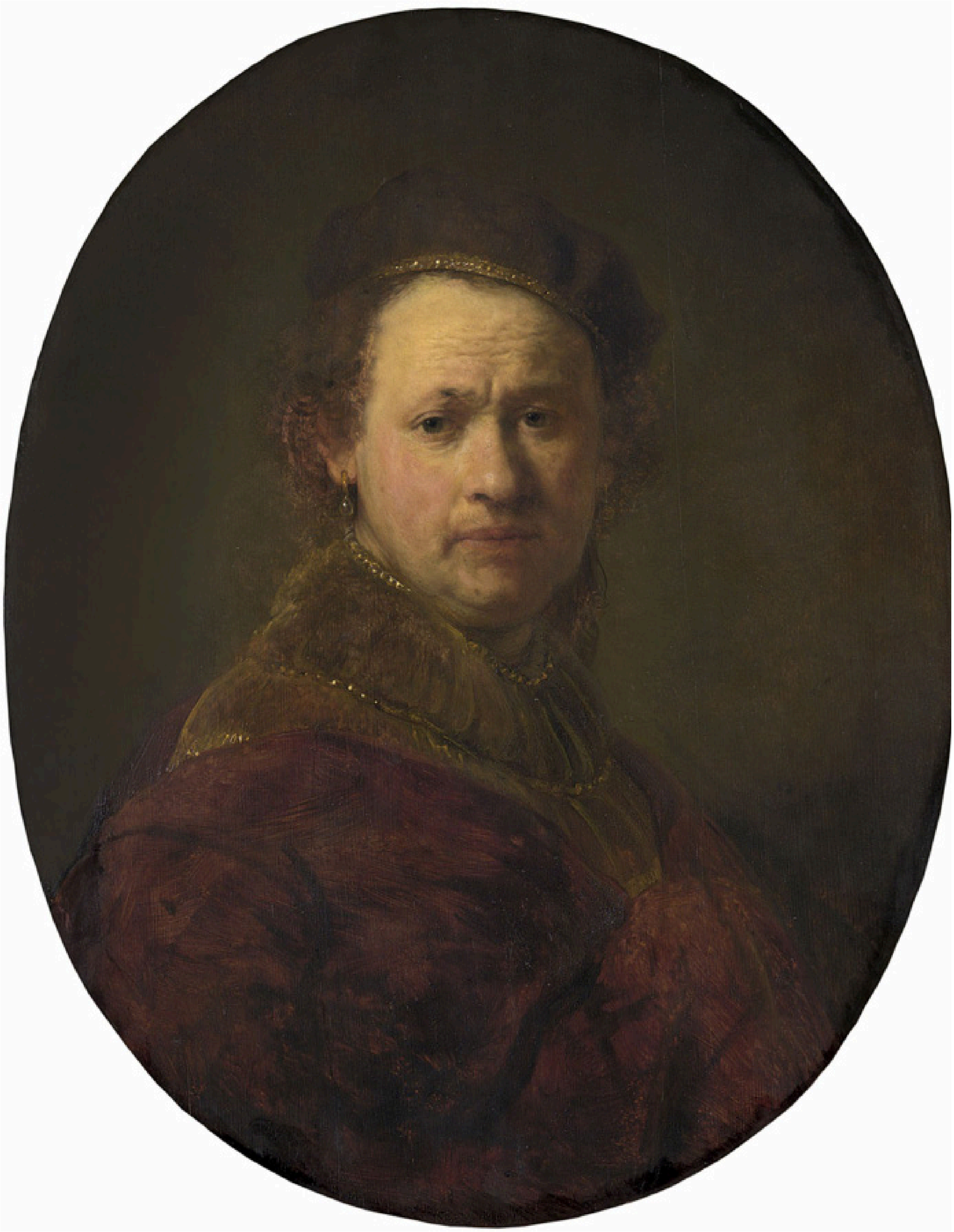
***Portrait of a Young Man* (1513-14) by Raphael. (Possibly found in a bank vault in an undisclosed location 2012.**


LA BELE FERONIERE
LEONARD D'AWINCI

Portrait of Cecilia Gallerani mistress of Ludovico Sforza, known as, *Lady with the Ermine* or *La Belle Ferronière* (c. 1490) by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519).

Victory for Germany looked likely as Hitler had recently overwhelmed Belgium, Holland and France, restructured Poland and annexed Austria. The report covered the return of art from the Soviet Union and the United States and listed art taken from Germany from the 1500s to the 1930s. It covered items that had been looted, such as by the Swedes in the Thirty Years War and items legally acquired by museums such as the Louvre or the Metropolitan. It even optimistically included Rembrandt's *Christ and the Magdalene* in the British Royal Collection. Whether the items had left Germany legally or not wasn't of interest and the report included coins, medals, glassware, military flags, silver, porcelain, sculptures, medieval armour and paintings.

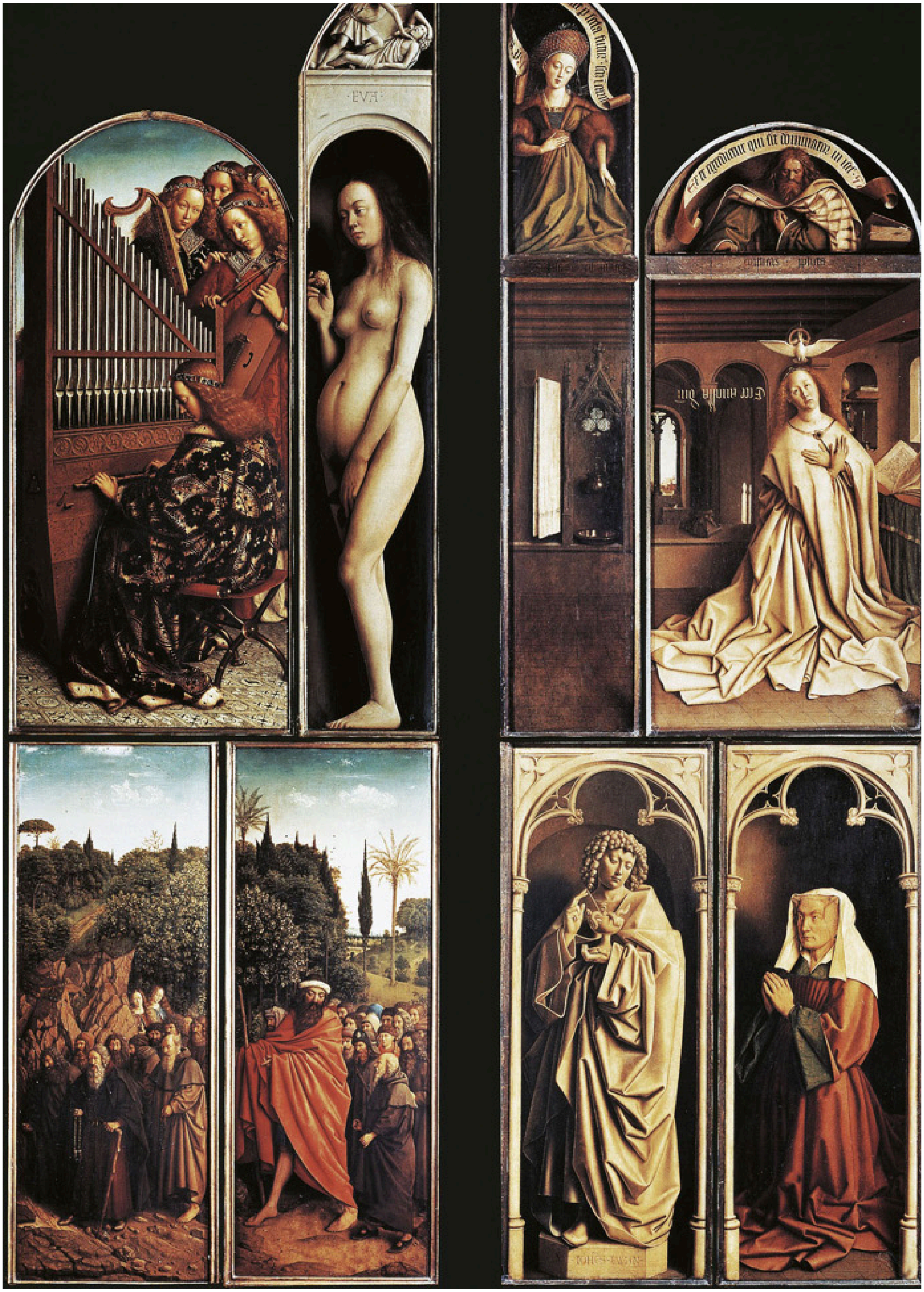
The report requested 1800 works from France, particularly items looted during the Napoleonic era. Napoleon had looted Munich in 1806, Kassel in 1807 and Vienna in 1809. From Kassel alone Napoleon had taken 299 paintings including 4 by Rubens, 16 by Rembrandt and a single Titian. The Kummel Report also ordered the return of 584 gold medals and 4428 silver medals taken from Kassel. It demanded a number of paintings from the Louvre including seven works by Dürer removed from the Albertina Museum in Vienna in 1809 and Rembrandt's Self Portrait, taken in 1806.



Self Portrait **by Rembrandt (1606-69).**

The Report was presented to the Reich's chancellery in January 1941. Hitler intended to enforce it after a successful Nazi victory. The report did, however, serve as a guide to Nazi looting and as an indication of what would have transpired if the Nazis had been victorious.

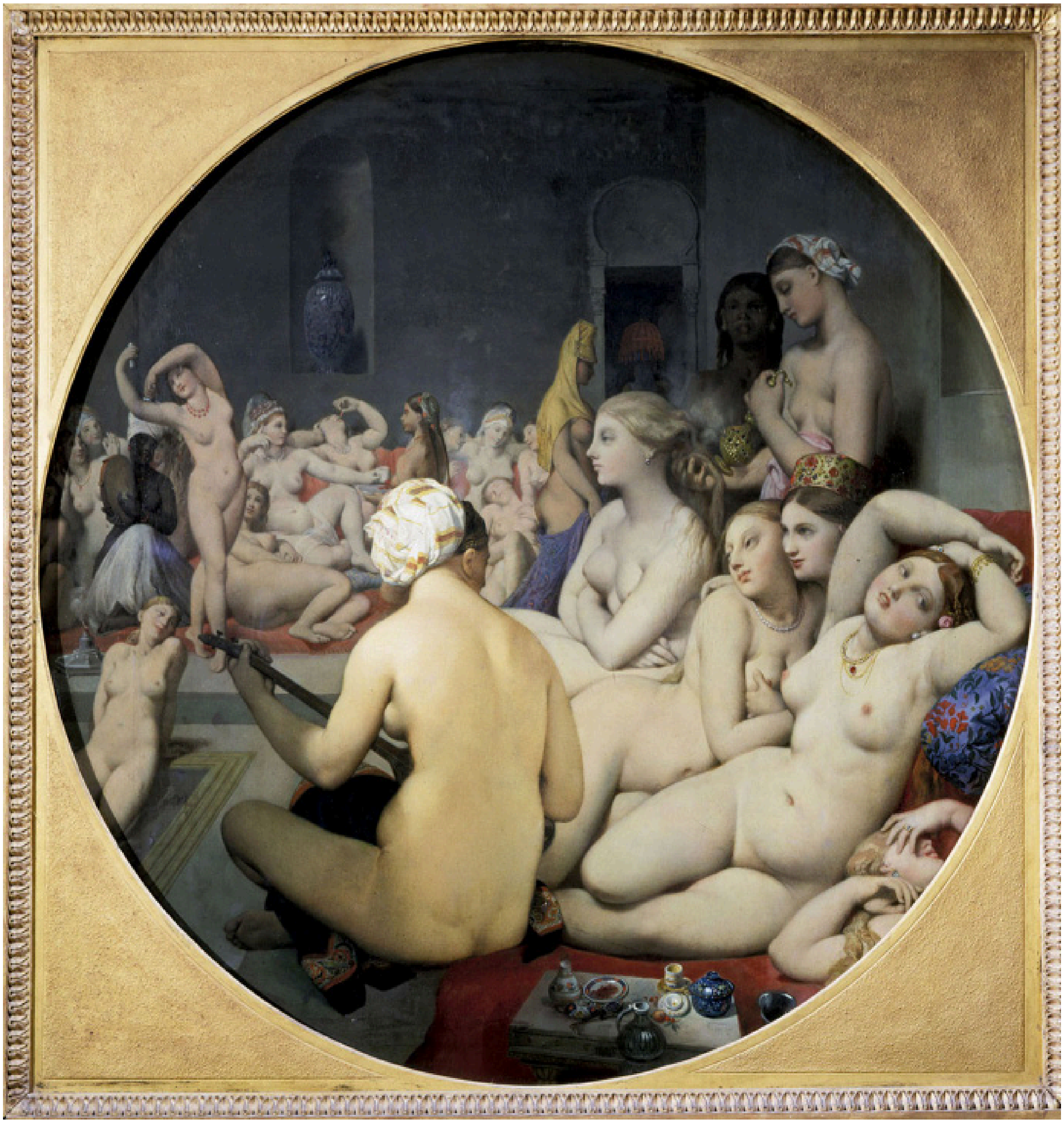
After General Keitel's directives in France, Hitler proclaimed his premier right over all confiscated works and decreed that all units and commanders in France should keep Posse aware of what items had been confiscated or were available for purchase. Initially three main government branches were tasked with the looting operation in occupied France: the Einsatztab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (known as the ERR) under Alfred Rosenberg, the German Embassy under Ambassador Abetz, who worked with Foreign Minister Von Ribbentrop, and the Wehrmacht. The ERR headed by Rosenberg in partnership with Goering dominated the French confiscations.


EVA

Detail from the Ghent Altarpiece Adoration of the Mystic Lamb (1432) by Jan van Eyck *c.* 1380/90-1441. Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium.

The ERR was self-contained and operated independently of other Nazi apparatus. They tried to conduct as much of their work in secret and in house. ERR intelligence agencies sought out the art and bribed collaborators for information on hidden collections. Appraisers established quality and troops removed the art and sealed areas off. Carpenters, packers and transport personnel delivered the items to cataloguers and researchers.

Jewish collections were seized and Posse was given an account at the Reichscreditbank in Paris with RM500,000 to buy artworks from non-Jewish collectors. The pre-war Paris art market was dominated by Jewish dealers . Paul Rosenberg, whose gallery was at Rue de la Boetie, managed to send some paintings to London, which he had sent on to him in New York and this allowed him to stay in business. The 300 paintings he left in France were all confiscated and contained examples by Renoir, Monet, Manet, Degas, Cézanne, Courbet, Delacroix, Ingres, Gericault, Picasso, Braque, Modigliani and Matisse.

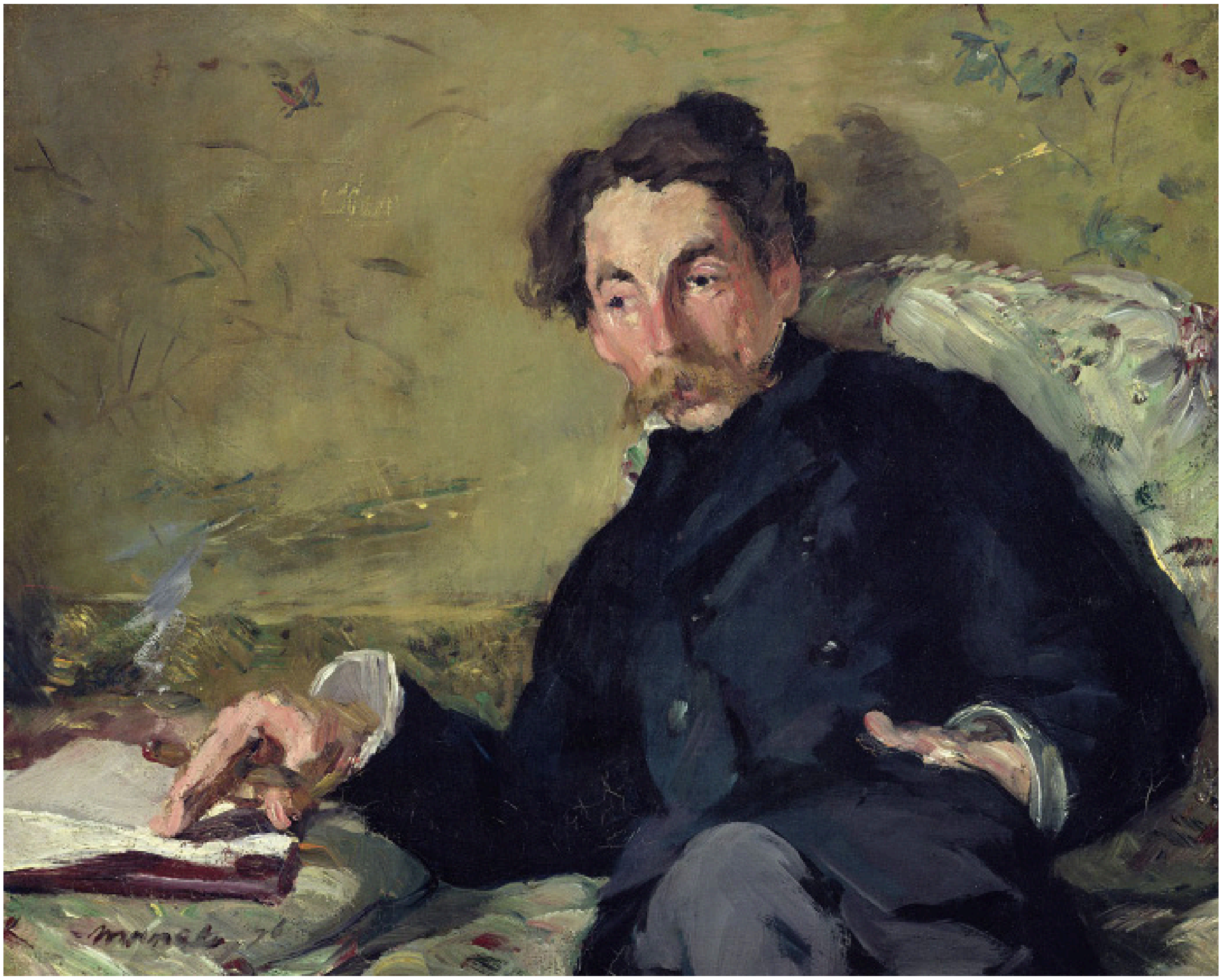


The Turkish Bath **(1862) by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780-1867).**

Bernheim-Jeune was one of the oldest art dealerships in Paris, having started as an art supplies store in Besancon in 1795. The Bernheim-Jeune galleries at Avenue du General-Maunory and at Avenue Desbordes-Valmore were sequestered in the autumn of 1940 and the premises put up for sale, whilst the ERR confiscated the majority of the paintings. The Bernheims smuggled some of their paintings into Monte Carlo and a few into Switzerland. Their ancient Greek and Roman statues that they had kept in their Paris town house with their private collection of paintings including Cézanne's 'L'Estaque' and two Corots were also stolen.

David David-Weill, who controlled his family company Lazard Frères, was one of the most discerning collectors in Paris before the war. His collection incorporated Limoges enamels, Egyptian antiquities, Islamic ceramics, medieval metalwork, Chinese bronzes, gold and silver sculpture and objects, rare books, pre-Columbian artefacts and paintings ranging from works by Goya, Corot, Renoir, Ingres's *Turkish Bath*, Courbet's *Studio of a Painter*, Manet's *Portrait of Stephanie Mallarmé*, Renoir's *Frog Pond* and Watteau's *Study of Young Negroes*. He gave over 1000 gifts to French museums and curators would call him for help with an acquisition. By 1931 he was president of the Board of Directors of National Museums.

Concerned about the war, he crated and sent parts of his collection to Sourches in the free zone but, by 1941, the ERR had illegally extended its reach here and on 11th April 1941, 130 crates were removed and sent to the ERR collecting point at the Jeu de Paume Museum. The Lazard Frères bank and its headquarters on Rue Pillet-Will were sequestered and David-Weill's home in Neuilly was impounded. Other major Jewish collections that suffered a similar fate were Levy-Benzion, Wildenstein, Weil-Picard, Kann, Halphen, Wassermann, Hamburger, Salomon Flavian, Federer, Thierry, Kronig and Rosenstein.



***Stephane Mallarmé* (1876) by Edouard Manet (1832-83)**

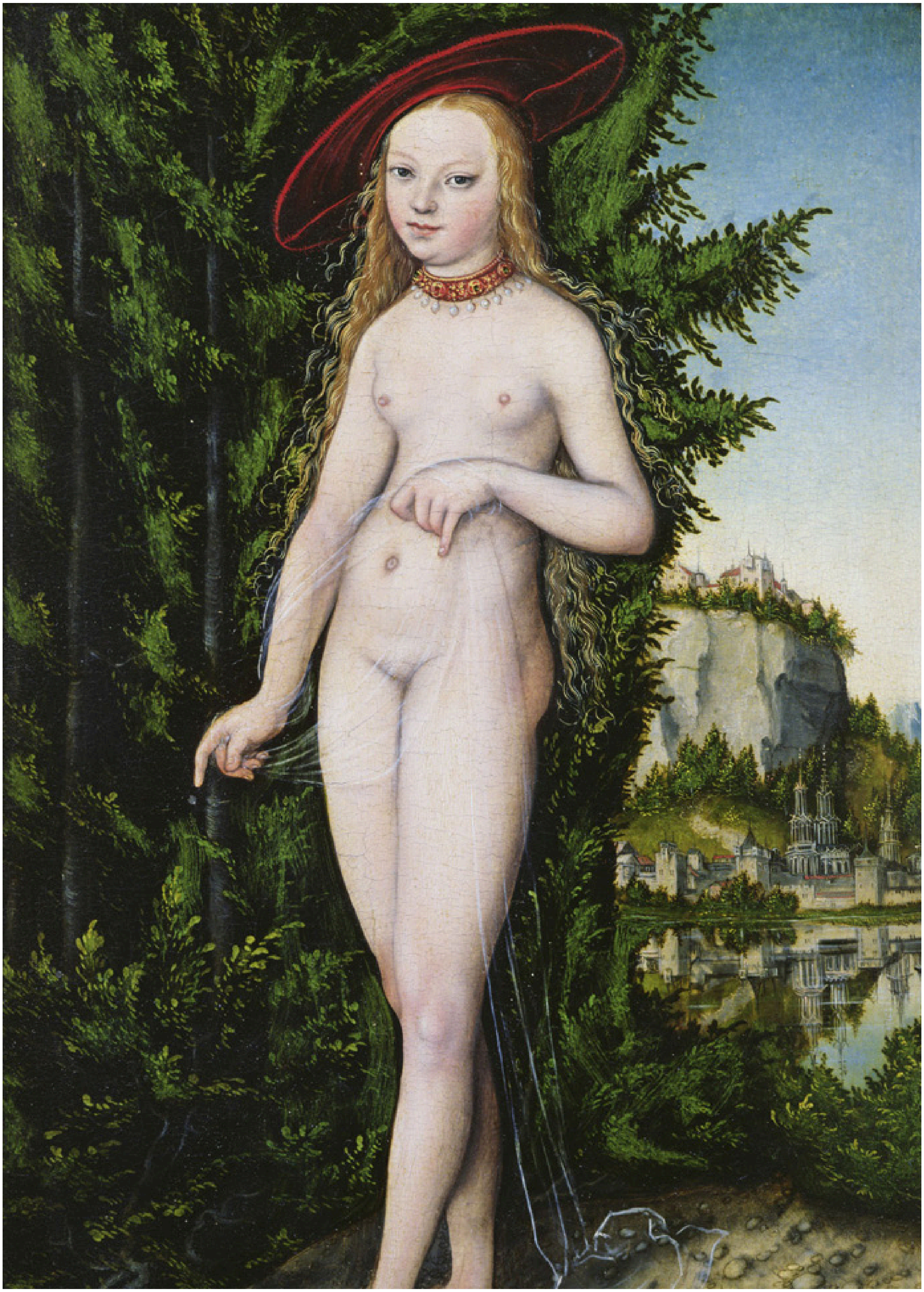
Adolph Schloss had made a fortune in commodities and kept his collection of 333 paintings at his townhouse at 38, Avenue Henri-Martin. The collection included works by Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Petrus Christus, Ruysdael and Corneille de Lyon. Schloss moved his collection to the Château de Chambon near Tulle in Correze in central France, On 8th April 1943 Schloss was arrested in Nice and his collection was discovered soon afterwards before being split between the Louvre and the Nazis.

In Paris the ERR divided their operations between confiscation, sorting and disposal. Paintings were collected at regional depots and sent to the central sorting clearing house at the Musée de Jeu de Paume in Paris. Hans Posse and, after his death in 1942, his successor, Herman Voss, were supposed to have the first choice over artworks for the Linz museum. Goering installed Dr Bruno Lohse as his spy in the ERR. Lohse started to arrange private viewings for Goering, who visited the Jeu de Paume ten times between November 1940 and December 1941.

Walter Andreas Hofer, Goering's curator at his country estate, Karinhall, would sometimes arrive first and prepare the paintings for Goering's visit. Some were taken by Goering, some dispatched to the Führerbau for Linz and some sold to local dealers for hard currency.

On the 26th September 1941 Hofer wrote:

> I have inspected the paintings of Baroness Alexandrine R. [Rothschild]. They are truly sensational! Her collection consists of twenty five paintings each of the highest quality and greatest importance. Among them is the charming *Infanta Margarita* by Velasquez, which you must at any means necessary to acquire for your collection. You will never find a Velasquez of such exquisite quality and in such perfect condition ... This collection also includes a large number of modern jewels. Naturally, everything will remain where it is until you decide what you want.[4]



Venus in a Landscape **(1529) by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472-1553).**

At the Jeu de Paume, Goering would sort the exhibits into four categories; the first was for Hitler. Hitler would make selections from photographs in the albums sent to him, but at this stage of the war Goering made the final choice before falling from favour in 1942. On a visit on 5th February 1941, Goering selected 53 works of art for Hitler, mainly from the Rothschild and Seligman collections, before having them delivered to the Führerbau in Munich on his own train. The second choice was for himself, both for his own private collection at Karinhall and valuable and modern works he wanted to use for exchange deals. The third choice was for places of higher learning within the Reich such as universities, and finally a selection was made for other German museum collections.

Works of art for Karinhall were immediately placed on Goering's private train. Between February 1941 and November 1942 eight consignments were transported to Karinhall with a total of 700 paintings, as well as sculpture and objects. Amongst the paintings were works by Cranach, Boucher's *Venus*, Fragonard's *Young Girl with Chinese Figure*, Tenier's *Adam and Eve in Paradise* and Chardin's *Joyeuse de Volant*.

Goering always cloaked his activities at the Jeu de Paume with a veneer of legality, often promising to make payments but never actually paying. In 1942, after French protests, he had Dr Hermann Bunjes draw up a spurious defence of the ERR's activity entitled, 'French Protests against the Safeguarding of Ownerless Art Properties in Occupied France' which rejected all French arguments and maintained the confiscations were carried out to protect the artworks.

There were few objections to the looting from within the Reich except for the fighting Wehrmacht, who generally refused to become involved, and Count Wolff Metternich, the head of the Kunstschutz in Paris who had been curator of the museums of the Rhineland. Metternich tirelessly sought to undermine and condemn the activities of the ERR, even warning Jewish collectors that they were about to get raided. Metternich also held secret meetings with the French authorities and handed over lists of confiscated items that were useful to the Allies when making restitutions after 1945. Metternich was recalled but it is likely that his extensive knowledge of Goering's and the ERR's illegal activities kept him safe.

Maria Almas-Dietrich, art dealer, seated centre.

Although Goering was the most powerful visitor to the Jeu de Paume, word spread that there were paintings available, and dealers started to buy and arrange trades of paintings for the Nazi overlords. Gustav Rochlitz of 222 rue de la Rivoli was a regular and, after some deals with Lohse, was given a visa by Goering to travel freely between the French and German occupied zones. In return Rochlitz had to give Goering first refusal on every artwork he came across. Goering, who hated parting with cash, bartered paintings neither he nor Hitler wanted at the Jeu de Paume for artworks. In February 1941, he exchanged 11 works including a Degas, Braque, Corot, three Matisses and two Picassos from the Rosenberg collection for a Titian and a Weenix from Rochlitz.

Rochlitz managed to extract 81 paintings from the Jeu de Paume in 17 exchanges that he sold around Europe for enormous profits. In February 1942, Rochlitz delivered an *Adoration of the Magi* by an unknown Flemish painter and obtained eight modern paintings including a still life by Picasso, two Matisses and a Braque from the collection of Alphonse Kann, and a Pissarro entitled *Country Scene* from the Meyer collection that has never been seen again. A few months later on 21st May, in return for two still lifes, he received three paintings by Matisse from the Rosenberg Collection, *Reclining Woman with Still Life of Flowers and Fruit*, *Seated Woman Wearing a Blue Dress* and *Seated Woman Wearing a White Blouse*.

Another dealer, who sold Hitler more paintings than anyone else but mainly of low quality including several fakes, was Maria Dietrich. She survived duping the Führer only because of her friendship with Eva Braun, Hitler’s girlfriend. Dietrich was considered hopelessly incompetent by the art world but had a certain charm as Hitler invariably bought what she offered him.

Local French dealers such as Charles Collet, Martin Fabiani and Roger Dequoy all profited handsomely from the German confiscations and were regulars at the Jeu de Paume. At the end of the war enough artworks were found at Collet’s home to fill 50 two-ton trucks. Dequoy was the manager of the Wildenstein gallery, and the gallery’s secret representative during the occupation, and on 26th January 1944 he took delivery of 60 modern paintings from Jewish collections in the largest exchange ever transacted between a dealer and the ERR. Unfortunately for Dequoy, the deal was cancelled by the ERR because they felt Dequoy had not offered enough in return and the disappointed dealer had to return the 60 paintings.

Artworks that were confiscated and collected for Adolf Hitler, seen here examining art in a storage facility. They were designated for a proposed *Führermuseum* in Linz, Austria.

Lamentation Of The Christ **by Tintoretto (1518-1594). In the hands of the Nazis (c.1941).**

Paul Cailleux of 136 rue de la Faubourg Saint Honore was another French dealer who had a good war, selling 63 paintings, objects, tapestries and drawings mainly to the Krefeld and Dusseldorf museums. From Cailleux, in June 1941, Dusseldorf acquired Hubert Robert's *The Gorge at Ollioules* and Fragonard's *Portrait of a Man in a Cape* and Krefeld works by Aved, Belle and a portrait of the Marquis de Marigny by Jean Francois de Troy. Cailleux also furnished the new Reichsbank with tapestries and furnishings, on one occasion selling them a cycle of four Spanish tapestries showing scenes from Don Quixote for 2.5m francs.

The French dealer Léon Rosenberg, who had seen his own gallery sequestered, complained in a letter dated 22nd February 1945, 'And Cailleux, who was in charge of naming temporary administrators, appointed himself as administrator over the Josse Hessel, Bernheim-Jeune and Wildenstein galleries!'[5] Other dealers who worked closely with the Nazis and conducted a thriving trade were J. O. Leegenhoek and Schmit and Company.

The art market flourished during the war, bringing an end to the unsatisfactory 1930s when prices had dropped 70 percent from before the Great Depression. The Jewish dealers were arrested, deported or fled to England or the USA, leaving the path open to non-Jewish dealers. German dealers such as Karl Haberstock arrived with deep pockets and the Nazi elite started to collect voraciously driving up prices. Prices of the artists most sought after by the Nazis, such as Vermeer, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Frans Hals, Cranach and Dürer went very high.

In 1942 two Rembrandts belonging to Etienne Nicolas were sold to the Linz museum for RM60m. Other German museums also used the opportunity to improve their collections, although they had to be careful to avoid the degenerate art that Hitler objected to. The Dusseldorf Museum, for example, bought 68 paintings during the first few months of 1941 and the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna was also active.

The Nazi Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, was one of the few Nazis to appreciate modern French painting and he too was a regular at the Jeu de Paume. Using his cultural attaché as broker, Ribbentrop arranged an exchange with Goering via the ERR on 24th November 1942. Goering offered Delacroix's *Lion with a Snake* and Utrillo's 'Rue de Sannois,' both from the Rosenberg collection, and a 'Forest Scene' by Courbet from the Bing Collection whilst the ERR, on Goering's behalf, received from Ribbentrop a Joos de Momper, a Gobelin tapestry and a work optimistically attributed to Albert Cuyp.

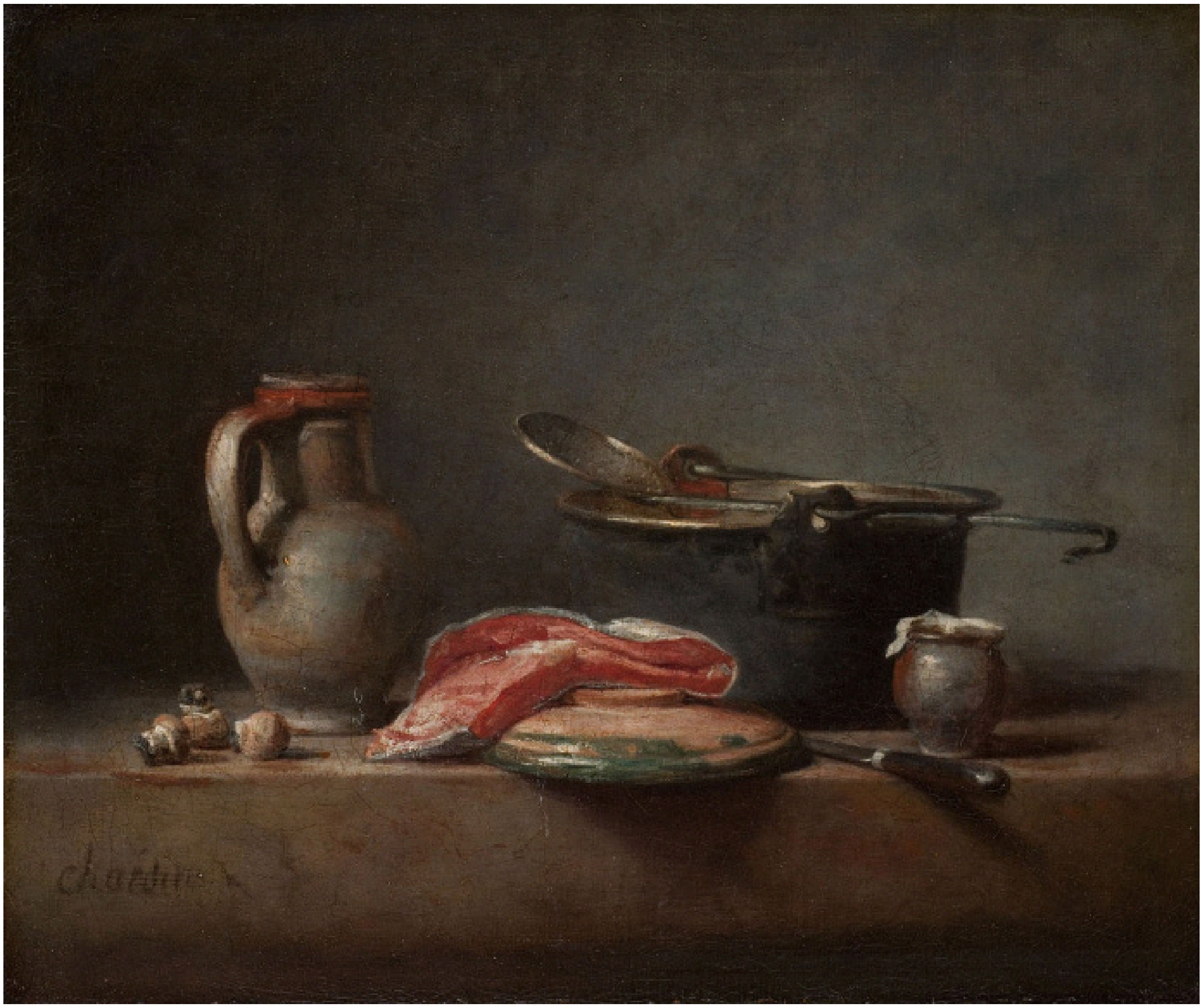
On the right, German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop. (1941).

Goebbels cattily observed that Ribbentrop had bought the ‘von’ in his name, married his fortune and intrigued for his position. Ribbentrop had in fact married the wealthy Annelies Henkell, the daughter of Germany’s largest wine vendor. He purchased his title from a distant aunt to whom he may have been vaguely related and he collected art because it fitted his image as an aristocrat. His collecting tastes generally followed Hitler’s with examples from the Austro-Bavarian school and German Old Masters, but he also had a Fra Angelico that his wife had inherited, and he collected modern French works by Derain, Monet, Corot, Courbet and Moreau. Ribbentrop thought of himself as a sophisticated man and above the bourgeois taste of the Nazi hierarchy and he knew he was powerful enough to weather Hitler’s displeasure in deviating from the party’s normal collecting protocol.

Ribbentrop was never accepted by the German or English aristocracy who immediately saw through him and rated him a *parvenu*. When

Ribbentrop was German Ambassador to London he borrowed 67 paintings from German museums for the embassy at Carlton House. He also brought over Hitler’s architect, Albert Speer to oversee the RM5m redecoration of the embassy. He threw fabulous parties with gourmet fare, but the English nicknamed the embassy the ‘Frankfurter Hauptbahnhof’ and a contemporary observed, ‘He relied for the success of his mission not on the simple truth of his cause, which was bad, but on its gorgeous trappings.’[6] His stint in London finished when Hitler, impressed by Ribbentrop’s pseudo-aristocratic pretensions and believing he had useful contacts, appointed him Foreign Minister in February 1938.

When Ribbentrop signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of non-aggression between the Soviets and the Third Reich on 24th August 1939, the Russians also quickly saw through his pretensions and mocked him as a glorified champagne salesman. Andrei Zhdanov, soon to be tasked by Stalin with the desperate defence of Leningrad, said of Ribbentrop ‘...Those hips! Those hips!’



***Nature Morte* (Dead Nature), 1750-1760 by Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin 1699-1779. This painting was one of the artworks placed on the Musées Nationaux Recuperation (NMR) list and later allocated to the Louvre.**

Shipments of confiscated art continued to arrive from France until the summer of 1944. The last ERR report written in July 1944 in Berlin details that between April 1941 and July 1944 29 major shipments of works were transported from Paris to Germany. A total of 120 railway cars had been filled with 4,170 crates of art, and in France alone 21,000 objects were confiscated from 203 collections. There were 10,000 paintings, drawings and engravings amongst the total and they were shipped to six Nazi warehouses. Although many of these paintings were returned by the Allies after the war, many more failed to find their owner and remained unclaimed. As such, there are currently an estimated unclaimed two thousand objects under the protection of France's national museums. Amongst this total are nearly one thousand paintings, including works by Picabia, Ernst, Derain, Vlaminck, Matisse, Picasso, Cézanne, Degas, Monet, Courbet, Delacroix, Chardin and Boucher.

Whilst 500 of these works can be found in the Louvre, 38 at the Pompidou Centre and 13 at the Rodin Museum there has never been a proper inventory made of these items, either by the national museums or the Ministry of Culture. Since it is almost impossible to find out about these works and inquiries are met merely with the advice to trawl the museum catalogues where it is hard to establish which items have this provenance, these works have become the de facto possessions of the museums. Some items grace government offices, an example being the bust of a young woman said to be Madame de Pompadour attributed to the eighteenth-century sculptor Jean Baptiste Pigalle, which can be found in the Pompadour Room of the Elysée Place, home of the French President.

From the war up until the present day there has been virtually no effort on the behalf of French museums to try and find the owners of these artworks and the lack of a catalogue is an evasive tactic. Hubert Landais, head of the Administration of French National Museums from 1977 to 1987 is open about the issue: ‘It is a very bizarre story. We never attempted to look for the owners. I realize how surprising that must seem. The weak point in the justification offered by museum administrators is that no one in the last fifty years has taken the initiative.’[7] According to the French Ministry of Culture, 61,000 works of art have been returned to France and about 45,000 or 80 per cent have been given back to their original owners. These figures exceed the 21,903 works removed officially in the ERR’s aforementioned final report of July 1944 because they include all forms of selling and looting on French soil.

The French have given these artworks the name MNRs standing for Musées Nationaux Recuperation. They have been placed under the control and guardianship of France’s museums but there is no centralised system of classification and, as each museum has devised its own system, it makes it hard to establish what these pictures are and where they are. Of the 15,000 works which were unclaimed by 1949 when the Commission de Recuperation Artistique (CRA) was dissolved, the top 2,000 items, including works by Courbet, Cézanne, Chardin and Boucher were removed and distributed around French museums. A government decree of 30th September 1949, declared these museums would be *détentuers precaires* or ‘precarious holders' and that they had to preserve the artworks, exhibit them and establish a proper inventory. These obligations were never met.

The reach of the Sonderauftrag extended as far as Italy who Germany considered her closest ally. The Pact of Steel, formerly known as the Pact of Friendship, was the Alliance between Germany and Italy. It was signed between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany on 22nd May 1939 and witnessed by the two foreign ministers, Count Galeazzo Ciano and Joachim von Ribbentrop. The pact was intended to last ten years but it actually folded when Italy signed an armistice with the Allies on September 1943 after they invaded Sicily.

Hitler charged Himmler with negotiating the border issues surrounding the South Tyrol whereby 220,000 ethnic Germans were to be migrated into the Reich along with any objects of German cultural importance. Himmler originally wanted to repatriate these citizens under a forced migration but the Italians negotiated a compromise whereby these people could choose between staying or leaving and taking up German citizenship in a decision that had to be made before 31st December 1939. Those that opted to move would leave for Germany before 31st December 1942.

A pact entitled 'Rules for the Repatriation of German Citizens and for the Emigration of German Speaking Inhabitants of the Alto Adige to Germany' was formalised on 21st October 1939. Art of German origin (as long as it didn't violate Italian export regulations) was to be sent to Germany whilst works of Italian or Roman origin were to remain in South Tyrol. Needless to say, the vagueness of these directives led to difficulties of interpretation. Kajetan Muhlmann, the looting enforcer who had had so much success in Holland and Poland wrote, 'A personal meeting took place between the Duce and the Reichführer SS which concerned art objects from German cultural circles that were created in the South Tyrol: these objects, whether they belong to the state or church or are private property, will be returned to the Reich, while art objects from the Roman cultural milieu will remain in Italy.'[8]

The Nazi agency responsible for the return of *Deutsches Kulturgut* (German cultural objects) known as the *Kulturkommission* was headed by Wolfram Sievers, who was the business manager of the Anhenerbe and answered directly to Himmler. He encountered constant stonewalling and evasion by the Italians. Sievers made inventories of seven museums including those at Clauzetto, Sterzing, Vipiteno, Brunico, Bressanone, Merano and Bolzano but by July 1941 the commission had achieved almost nothing. The Italians also refused to let anything be removed from churches, saying the Nazis had to deal directly with the Vatican on such matters. Posse who had been ordered by Hitler to keep abreast of the situation wrote, that, ‘further dealings with the Italians based on the current understandings were pointless.’[9]

A frustrated Sievers requested that, ‘we therefore must request the involvement of higher authorities in Berlin, complemented by an official German step in Rome.’[10] However, although Himmler applied pressure, Hitler, wary of upsetting his axis partner, did not. Thus, although the Italians did agree to a few items, and the Nazis stole others, the Nazis did not initially achieve the same level of looting success in Italy as they had managed in Poland, the Baltic or France.

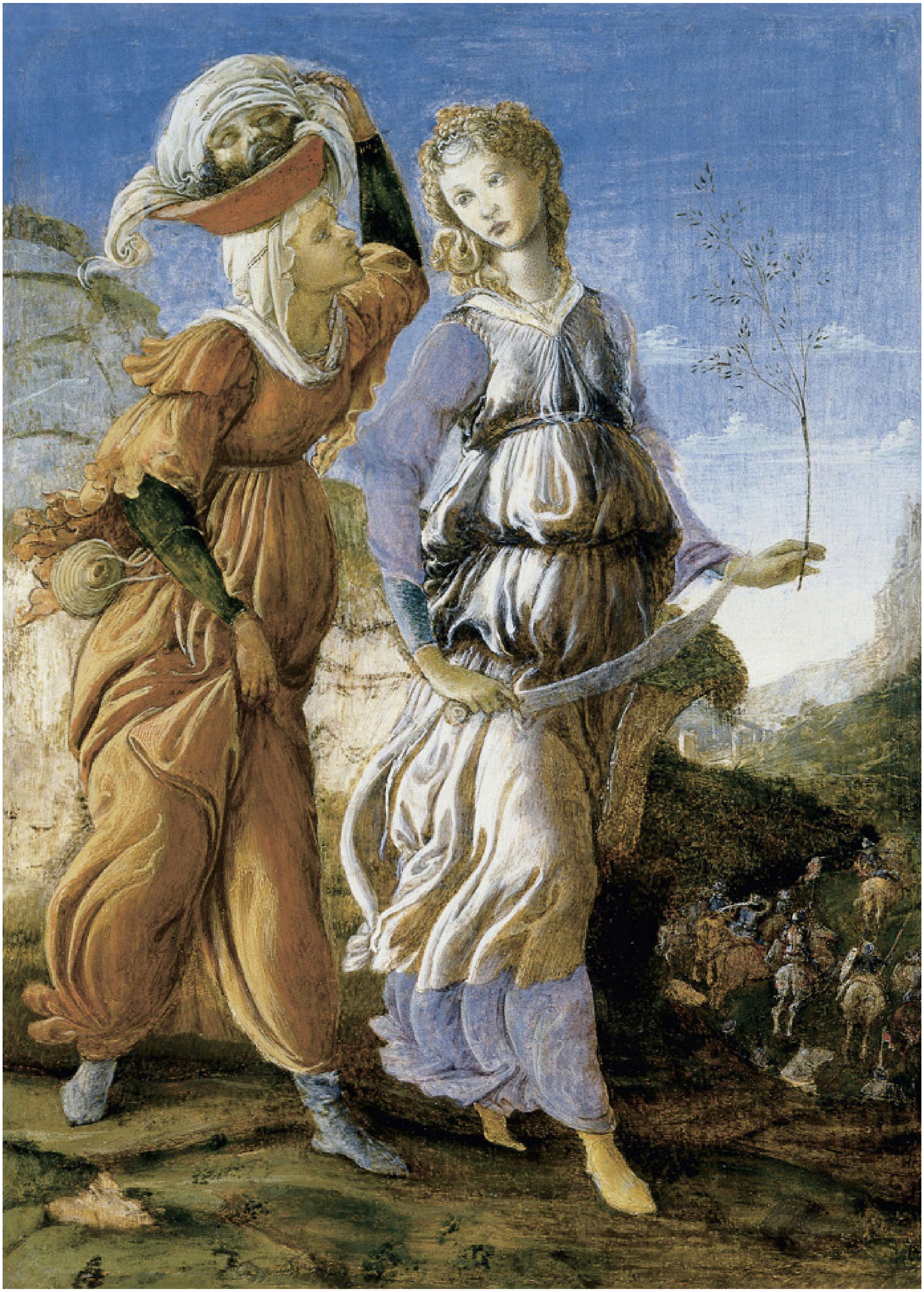
Posse had to content himself with acquiring artworks in Italy for hard currency and he was provided with an account of RM500,000 at the German Embassy. Posse’s dealer in Rome was Prince Philipp von Hesse, who was a descendant of Queen Victoria and King Frederick III of Prussia. By profession an architect, von Hesse had settled in Rome after marrying Princess Mafalda, one of the daughters of King Victor Emmanuel, and consequently had good contacts amongst the impoverished but art-rich Italian aristocracy. Hesse later made the mistake of not notifying Hitler when he became aware, through his father-in-law, that Mussolini was about to be arrested in 1943. In retaliation, on 8th September 1943 Hitler had Hesse and his wife Mafalda arrested, with Hesse interned at Flossenbürg and then Dachau and Mafalda at Buchenwald. Mafalda was forced into prostitution and then chained to a nearby defence factory as a human shield. After Allied bombing blew her arm off she bled to death. Although Hesse survived the war, the Hesse Crown Jewels, one of the finest jewellery collections in Europe, were stolen by the US army from Kronberg Castle in November 1945.

Posse first visited Italy in March 1941, staying two weeks and visiting Rome, Turin, Genoa, Naples and Florence, where he acquired 25 paintings for Linz using his fund at the German Embassy. After returning to Germany for a few days, Posse was back in Italy in late March at the invitation of von Hesse with a further RM500,000 arranged for him by Dr Hans Lammers, the head of the Reichskanzlei (state chancellery). Returning in June, Bormann arranged a further RM1.65m for Posse who continued buying on the open market. Posse’s tireless hunting for the Linz Museum ended in mid December 1942 when he died of cancer of the mouth. Hitler rewarded his loyalty with a state funeral at which a eulogy was read by Goebbels. Competition to succeed Posse was fierce and it was announced on 2nd March that Dr Herman Voss, the Director of the Dresden Gallery, was to become his successor.

Saving Michelangelo's David from the advancing Nazis. Local craftsmen wrapped the marble sculpture preparing it for its entombment.

After the allied invasion of Sicily on 10th July 1943, and the Italian capitulation, the Germans abandoned any pretence of safeguarding the artworks of the Italians and instigated a looting campaign. As the German Commander Field Marshal Albert Kesselring was forced into a fighting withdrawal up through Italy, whilst being constantly pressured by the Americans and English, SS units indulged in an orgy of looting and wanton destruction. The Villa Montezone at Livardi, which housed the Neapolitan State Archives and Royal Society Library, was incinerated with the additional loss of 70 paintings including Luini's *Madonna and Child*. The Anhenerbe was fully involved in the looting, establishing large depositories at the Castle of San Leonardo and at Campo Tures in the South Tyrol. Campo Tures was used to store masterpieces from the Uffizi, Pitti Palace and other museums of Florence.

The Italians tried to be as defensive as possible, hiding artworks or encumbering them and making them difficult to transport. Because of the size of Michelangelo's *David* in the Academia, Florence, the Italians wrapped the marble structure before entombing it in bricks. They removed the sculptures by Cellini and Giambologna from the Loggia dei Lanzi and hid them in the Tuscan hills. Donatello's pulpit in the Church of San Lorenzo was also entombed in brick.



***Judith with the head of Holofernes* (*c.* 1469-70) by Sandro Botticelli (1444/45-1510).**

A former official at the Uffizi, Roberto Siviero, formed an underground organisation with the aim of protecting Italy's artistic heritage from the Nazis. Siviero and his team, often at great personal risk, hid as much as they could from the retreating Germans. Goering, who was also active in collecting in Italy, badly wanted a Fra Angelico *Annunciation* which was kept in a monastery near San Giovanni Valdarno. Goering despatched the Kunstschutz to secure it for him but Siviero managed to get word to the monks, who spirited it away in time. On demanding to know why it had disappeared the Kunstschutz were informed it had been removed on orders from the Vatican.

There was little that Siviero could do to stop the Nazis looting on a large scale and in June 1944 orders were issued by the Standartenfuhrer Dr Alexander Lagsdorff of the Kunstschutz for the contents of the Montagnana repository to be evacuated by the 362nd Infantry Division. Complete confiscations of collections such as the Duke of Parma's led to endless convoys of art heading north to temporary depositories in South Tyrol before their eventual despatch into Germany. Siviero kept a close eye on the movement and location of the art with a particular interest in such masterpieces as Michelangelo's Bacchus, Rubens's *Return of the Peasants*, Cranach's *Adam and Eve* and Botticelli's *Judith with the Head of Holifernes* as well as countless works by Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese and Brueghel. Many of these works were recovered at the end of the war, having been amalgamated with the contents of the Führerbau in their eventual destination in the huge salt mines at Alt Aussee 50 kilometres east of Salzburg.

At 3 am on 22nd June 1941 Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa and invaded Russia with 3.2 million troops in the largest operation in human history in terms of area traversed, manpower and casualties. By late 1941 the Nazis had occupied 500,000 square miles of Russian territory containing 75 million people and taken 2.4 million Soviet troops prisoner. Hitler viewed the Russians as subhuman and the Soviet prisoners were allowed to starve or die of exposure.

Hitler had laid out his intention to invade the Soviet Union in his book *Mein Kampf* (published in 1925), saying that he wanted to give the German people 'Lebensraum' or 'living space.' This was known as the 'New Order' policy and he intended to eradicate the Russian urban population through starvation, using the strongest for slave labour, whilst resettling the area with

Germanic people. The result in lives lost was 5.5 million German and Axis soldiers, 7 million Russian soldiers and an estimated 20 million Russian civilians. There were also a further 25 million Russian homeless by the end of the war in 1945.

The bitter and brutal conflict on the Eastern front was mirrored in a chaotic looting operation far removed from the systematic efficiency demonstrated in the Netherlands and France. The task of looting was split between a bewildering array of different organisations including the SS (Protection Staff), the SD (Security Service), the Wehrmacht (regular fighting army), Rosenberg's RMBO (Reich Ministry for the Occupied Eastern Territories), and Ribbentrop's Sonderkommando. There was no orderly cataloguing or transport process similar to that of the ERR in France.

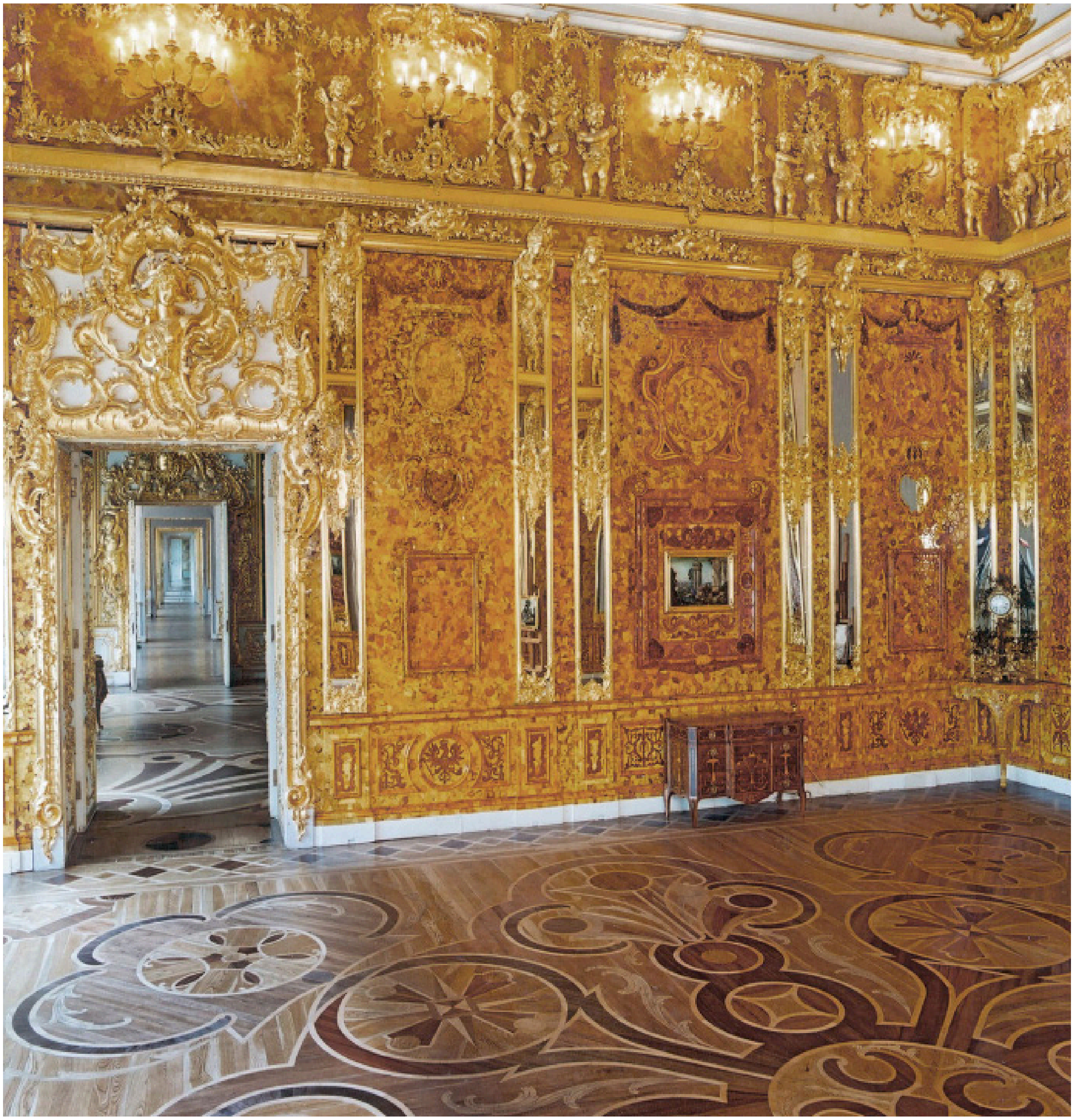
A March 1942 commission unleashed Rosenberg's ERR-Ost units and Rosenberg transferred several of his team from France, such as Robert Scholz and Niels von Holst. The scope of looting was overwhelming, even for the ERR, as the front stretched 1,300 miles from the Baltic down to the Black Sea. The ERR's main Work Group Ukraine cleaned out the municipal museum in Taganrog in the spring of 1942 before turning to the picture galleries of Pleskau and Kharkov, which yielded 40 wagons that were despatched back to Germany in October 1942. The exact history of the ERR-Ost is still being written, as only recently have the Central State Archives become accessible to Western scholars. In Kiev, the Museum of Ukrainian, Russian and Western Art and the Schevtchenko museums were plundered as well as the Ukrainian Academy of Science and the Medical and Research Institute.

Catherine's Palace, Tsarskoe Selo, St. Petersburg, Russia

The ERR caused considerable destruction, turning the Tchaikovsky Museum in Klin into a motorcycle repair shop and using the manuscripts and scores as fuel for the stove, and burning out the Ekaterinsky Palace in Pushkin after they had emptied it. The Wehrmacht abandoned their previous policy of criticising looting and joined in. The Nazi programme of cultural impoverishment included destruction of the Slavic culture and Slavic history and Hitler gave orders that anything cultural that wasn't worth stealing should be destroyed. An order issued by Field Marshall Walter Von Reichenau, and approved by Hitler, was read out by the prosecuting counsel at the Nuremberg trials, 'The Army is interested in extinguishing fires only in such buildings as may be used for army billets ... All the rest to be destroyed; no historical or artistic buildings in the East to be of any value whatsoever.' The Soviets later calculated that 427 museums out of 992 that fell into German hands, including those at Novgorod, Poltava, Smolensk and Leningrad, were totally destroyed.

More effective than the ERR at looting in the East was the Sonderkommando Ribbentrop. This was run by Ribbentrop back in Berlin and commanded by the Geheime Feldpolizei, Eberhard von Kunsberg, on the ground. The Sonderkommando was split into three battalions that followed the invading army groups in an organisational model echoing the murder squads, the Einsatzgruppen, and consisted mainly of SS forces attached to Ribbentrop's foreign ministry. The most effective of the Sonderkommando Ribbentrop battalions followed closely behind Fieldmarshall Wilhelm von Leeb's Army Group North's advance through the Baltic States into Russia through the late summer and autumn of 1941.

In August 1941 von Leeb's Army Group North reached the outskirts of Leningrad (modern-day St Petersburg) and dug-in, intending to starve the Russians into surrender and instigating the worst siege in modern times. The city was cut off for 872 days from September 1941 until its relief on 18th June 1943. Hitler wanted Leningrad because it was the Russian Baltic Fleet's main base and was the location of many heavy industrial and armaments factories. The Finns surrounded the city to the north and the Nazis to the south. The Sonderkommando quickly went into action removing all artworks from the Tsar's palaces surrounding the city and destroying the Catherine Palace, the Peterhof, Gatchina, Ropsha and Strelna, leaving them as charred ruins. The Russian prosecutor at Nuremberg estimated that 34,000 items were removed from the palaces at Marly, Peterhof and Pavlosk alone. German records show that 40 to 50 freight cars a month of looted valuables were despatched to Germany during this period by the Sonderkommando.



Tsarkoe Selo , Catherine Palace, Amber Room, decorated 1721-63. A gift of the King of Prussia; lost since 1944; reconstruction work completed in 2003.

One of the most precious artefacts was the Amber Room from Catherine the Great's palace at Tsarskoe Selo, a room entirely constructed of amber panels except for a few pieces of inlaid Pietra Dura marble. The room was also furnished with tables, chairs and ornaments made out of amber. The room's value was based not so much on the material, as amber washes up in great quantities on the Baltic shore, but for its craftsmanship and its historical importance as having been a gift of Friedrich Wilhelm I to Peter the Great in 1716. The Russians had removed all the movable amber pieces before the Germans arrived but had left behind the panelling. The German engineers rapidly dismantled the room and loaded it into 29 crates before it was shipped to and installed in the museum at Konigsberg. In the chaos at the end of the war the amber room disappeared and has never been seen again. The Russians have painstakingly rebuilt the room exactly as it was before.

The Germans left Tsarskoe Selo as a carcass stripped of its contents and incinerated. The Russian prosecutor at Nuremberg stated:

> At Zarskoje Selo the company of German Commandos seized and secured the property belonging to the palace-museum of the Empress Catherine. The Chinese silk draperies and the carved gilt ornaments were torn from the walls. The floor of artistic ornaments was dismantled and taken away. From the palace of the Emperor Alexander antique furniture and a large library containing some 6,000 to 7,000 volumes in French and over 5,000 volumes and manuscripts in Russian were removed ... After the occupation of any big city, the leaders of these commandos arrive, accompanied by various art experts. They inspect museums, picture galleries, exhibitions, and institutions of art and culture; they determine their condition and confiscate everything of value.[11]

Although the Amber Room went to Konigsberg, most of the objects were stored in a depot on the Hardenbergstrasse in Berlin. Most of the Soviets' greatest treasures, such as the 2.5 million objects in the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, were saved by the Soviets evacuating them to the east beyond the reach of the Germans. In March 1942 the Sonderkommando Kunsberg held an exhibition in Berlin displaying a selection of the items it had looted including books, paintings, archives, sculpture and valuables. It detailed that, by the end of 1942, it had removed 304,694 works of art and 97,500 books from the Soviet Union. At the beginning of August the unit was absorbed into the SS and given the title 'Waffen SS Special Disposal Battalion' and Kunsberg was removed as Ribbentrop decided he had made too many independent decisions.

During the Russian campaign Hitler's orders became more direct when dealing with how the Wehrmacht and the Sonderkommando Ribbentrop should behave. In the summer of 1941 Hitler issued an order that his forces would only be able to secure large areas in Russia, 'by striking such terror into the population that it loses all will to resist.' In late September 1941 he issued another directive to von Leeb and Ribbentrop, ‘that the Führer is determined to remove the city of St Petersburg from the face of the earth.’ Hitler believed in undermining the Slavic people at every level and pontificated, ‘Education will give the more intelligent among them an opportunity to study history, to acquire a historical sense, and hence to develop political ideas which cannot but be harmful to our ideas.’[12] It was, therefore, terror that was the first instrument of war in the East and the looting of art was secondary.

To understand the scale of the looting by the Nazi hierarchy and the reasons for it, it is necessary to have an understanding of the man who instigated the programme and led it, Adolf Hitler. Hitler was born in Braunau, a small village in Austro-Hungary on 20th April 1889. His father was a customs officer who beat him. Years later Hitler told his secretary he was beaten often until one day, ‘I then resolved never again to cry when my father whipped me. A few days later I had the opportunity of putting my will to the test. My mother, frightened, took refuge in front of the door. As for me, I counted silently the blows of the stick which lashed my rear end.’[13]

The family moved often, ending up in Linz. Hitler showed promise in elementary school but then had to drop back a year after the first year of high school. Hitler later said his educational slump was a rebellion against his father who wanted him to become a customs officer. Hitler dropped out of school at sixteen without a diploma. He moved to Vienna in 1905 and lived a Bohemian life, twice applying for and failing to gain admittance to the Academy of Fine Arts in 1907 and 1908. He was failed for his inability to draw figures - ‘Few heads, sample drawings unsatisfactory’ - and the school rector suggested that he become an architect. This was an astute observation as Hitler was rapidly becoming interested in architecture and noted in his memoirs:

> The purpose of my trip was to study the picture gallery in the Court Museum, but I had eyes for scarcely anything except the museum itself. From morning until late at night, I ran from one object of interest to another, but it was the always the buildings which held my primary interest ... In a few days I myself knew that I should someday become an architect. To be sure, it was an incredibly hard road; for the studies I had neglected out of spite at the Realschule were sorely needed. One could not attend the Academy’s architectural school without having attended the building school at the Technic, and the latter required a

> high school degree. I had none of all this. The fulfilment of my artistic dream seemed physically impossible.[14]

Hitler's lack of qualifications precluded the possibility of architectural school but he was always fascinated by the subject and liked to be personally involved in all the major building projects during his tenure as leader of the Third Reich. Albert Speer, Hitler's architect and later Reich minister for armaments and war production (1942-1945) said:

> When buildings were in question, Hitler repeatedly displayed his ability to grasp a sketch quickly and to combine the floor plan and renderings into a three dimensional conception. Despite all his government business and although he was dealing with anywhere from ten to fifteen large buildings in different cities, whenever the drawings were presented to him again - often after an interval of months - he immediately found his bearings and could remember what changes he had asked for.[15]

Speer also commented, 'In these conferences he usually behaved with civility and restraint. He asked for changes amiably and without any note of insult - entirely in contrast to the domineering tone he took towards his political associates.'[16]

Helmuth Kurth
München

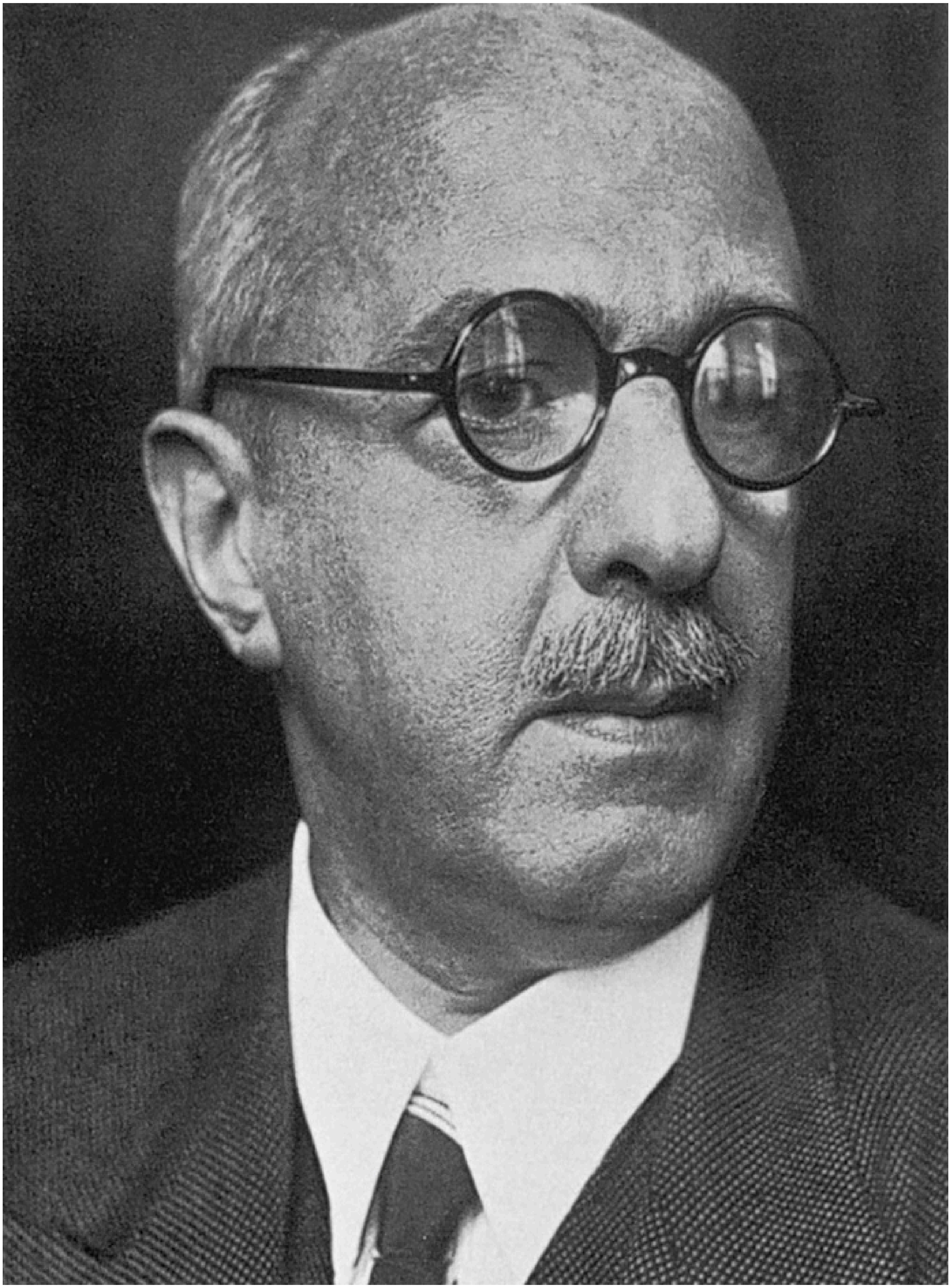
Hermann Goering at a Nazi Party Rally.

Without access to art or architectural school, Hitler struggled in Vienna eking out a living from copying scenes on postcards and selling these as paintings to shopkeepers and tourists. He is always portrayed as a poor artist and this reputation was strengthened by the English propaganda machine during the war which claimed he had been a housepainter and derided him for it. Hitler lacked his usual self confidence when it came to his art and he only gave his work to his closest associates such as Goering, Goebbels and Himmler. There are two of his watercolours kept today in the US Army's Military History Center in downtown Washington DC. The larger of the two is a view of a square in a Bavarian town or city and it displays a certain workmanlike proficiency. The colouring is sure, the perspective true and considering watercolour is such a difficult medium to work in, it is not a bad effort.

By 1909 Hitler was living in a shelter for the homeless and by 1910 he had settled in a house for poor working men. He spent time as a tramp living down and out. Although he was prepared to do business with Jews with his paintings he picked up his anti-Semitism and anti-Bolshevism at this time and blamed the Jews for Germany's defeat in WWI (because of the 1918 revolutions) and the post-war economic crisis. In 1913 he received a small inheritance from his late father's estate and moved to Munich to escape the Austrian draft. The Austrian army caught up with him but deemed him unfit to serve after a physical exam. Hitler then applied to King Ludwig of Bavaria and enlisted in the Bavarian army fighting in France and Belgium, ending the war as a lance corporal. He participated in the some of the worst battles of WWI including Ypres, Arras, Passchendaele and the Somme where he was wounded in the thigh. He was twice decorated for bravery with the Iron Cross, Second Class in 1914 and the Iron Cross, First Class in 1918. He maintained his painting by executing sketches and drawings for an army newspaper.

Hitler later said it was whilst recovering in a field hospital in 1918, after being temporarily blinded by mustard gas, that he became convinced that his destiny was to, 'save Germany.' During the war he became a passionate German patriot and he was horrified at how Germany capitulated at the end of war and by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles which demilitarised the Rhineland, re-created Poland and imposed economic sanctions. On his military discharge in March 1920 he entered politics and joined the National

Socialist German Workers Party, where he rapidly worked his way up whilst establishing himself with his beer-hall oratory, in which he attacked communists, monarchists, liberals and Jews. That Hitler was an accomplished speaker is well known and a look at the tapes of his delivery at the annual Nuremberg rallies shows that he had an unparalleled ability to whip up a crowd. Less well known is that he had considerable personal charm and in the early part of his career the charm was a more important part of his arsenal than fear.



Hans Posse. Director of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie (1913-1942) and Nazi administrator in charge of the depository of looted art during the Reich years.

In April 2000, on a fresh spring morning, the author took the late Lady Diana Mosley out to lunch in her adopted home city of Paris. Lady Diana Mosley, one of the beauties of her time, was still a striking woman at 90 with clear, pale blue eyes, and possessed a quick wit and the good manners of her generation. Evelyn Waugh remarked that her beauty, 'ran through the room like a peal of bells.' Diana first married Bryan Walter Guinness, later lord Moyne, of the Guinness beer dynasty, and then ran off with and later married Sir Oswald Mosley, who soon after was to become leader of the British Union of Fascists.

Diana first went to Germany with her sister Unity, who was then 19, and they attended the Nuremberg rallies of 1934 and 1935. In 1935 Unity introduced Diana to Hitler who made them his personal guests and in 1936 he provided Diana with a Mercedes and chauffeur for the Berlin Olympic Games. When Diana married Mosley it was in the Berlin drawing room of Joseph Goebbels and the only witnesses were Goebbels and Hitler who presented the couple with a silver-framed photograph of himself. In August 1939 Hitler told Diana over lunch that war was inevitable and on 29th June 1940, eleven weeks after the birth of her fourth son Max (later President of the FIA, the governing body of Motor Sport), she and Mosley were locked up for the war. The MI5 report of the time said that she was, 'a public danger at the present time ... and said to be far cleverer and more dangerous than her husband and will stick at nothing to achieve her ambitions.'

Sitting at a bistro and splitting a platter of *fruits de* mer it was hard to see anything sinister in this delightful and erudite woman who had edited magazines and proved a shrewd judge of contemporary literature when literary reviewer for the *London Evening Standard* for many years. As lunch progressed she started to open up and talk about Hitler, saying:

> It is considered heinous to say anything positive about Hitler and whenever I do I always get lambasted. However, it is impossible to understand unless you were there and my overriding memory is of his courteousness and his charm. When he was in a room you didn't notice anyone else. He had a magnetism that I only came across two or three times in my life and I have met practically everybody of interest during these last 90 years. How else do you think he managed to make everybody do what he wanted?

Hitler's maid, Rosa Mitterer, who lived and worked at Hitler's mountain retreat, the Berghof, concurs, 'He was a charming man, someone who was only ever nice to me, a great boss to work for.'[17] As Hitler rose up through the party the charm appeared less often but the magnetism and mystique endured and his leadership technique of giving the sub-commanders overlapping responsibilities kept them permanently nervous and trying to impress him. Goering, the No. 2 in the Third Reich, and a great bully of a man, later admitted that he would have a sick feeling in his stomach whenever he had to visit Hitler.

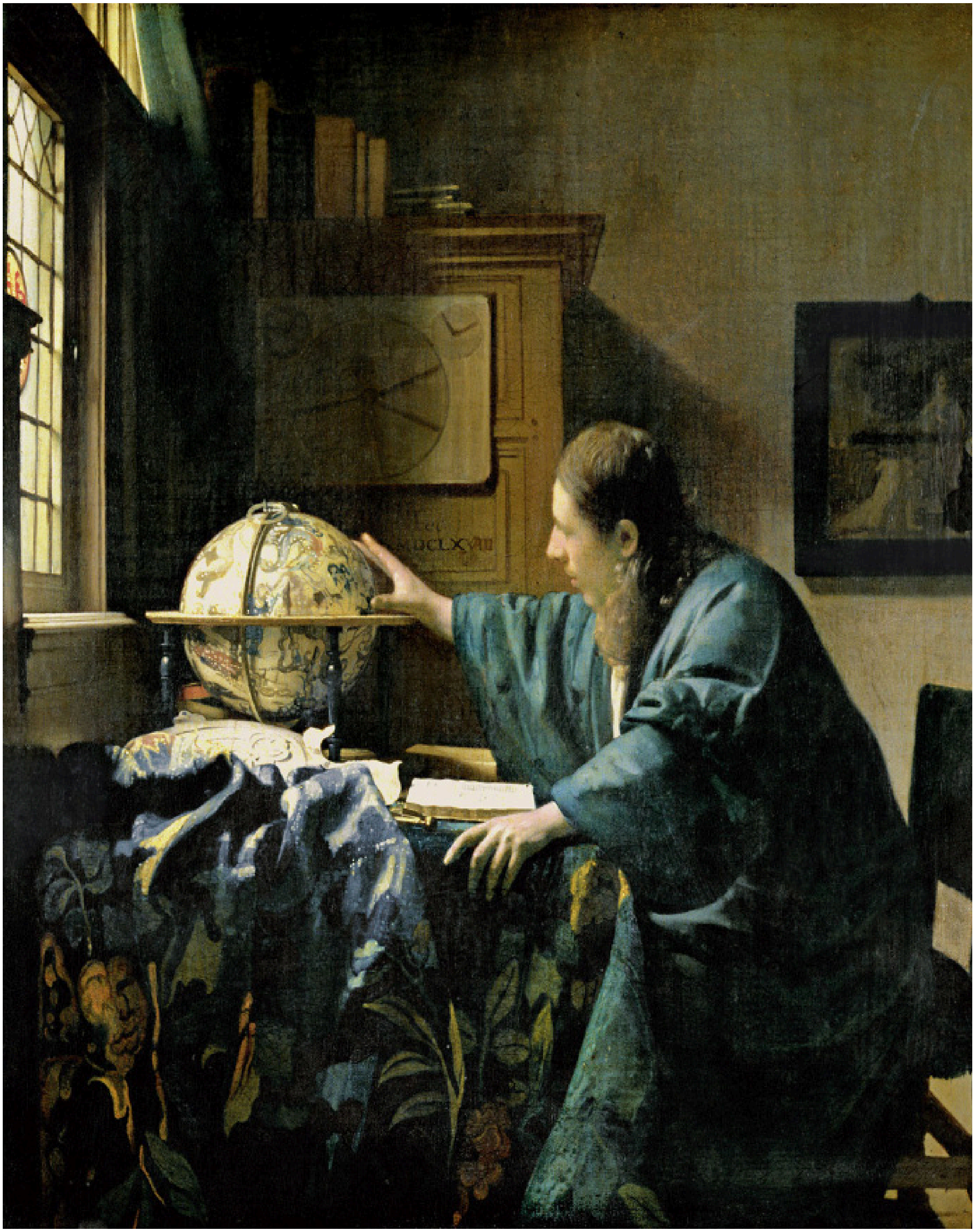
Hitler, who had left Linz some thirty years previously, having failed as an artist and spent time as a down-and-out in Vienna, found himself returning in triumph to Linz and addressing the adoring crowds on 12th March 1938 from the balcony of the town hall. He had crossed the border into Austria earlier that afternoon at his birthplace of Branau. This was the start of the Anschluss whereby Austria was incorporated into the Third Reich. The town he had left as a failure was now welcoming him back as a warlord and it must have been a bitter-sweet moment.

As the first non-German town he had visited as Chancellor of the Third Reich, Linz was to become the cornerstone of his new European Empire and he rapidly started designing a new city on a gigantic scale that was to be his capital, house his museum of art and contain his mausoleum at its centre. The gallery, code-named Sonderauftrag Linz, was to be the greatest gallery in the world, outshining the Louvre, the Prado and the Hermitage. Hitler had been collecting in a minor way since he had come to power, advised by his photographer Heinrich Hoffmann, mainly buying his beloved nineteenth-century Austro-Bavarian school, but a visit to Italy in the summer of 1938 made him realise his taste reflected his bourgeois upbringing and, although he never lost his taste for the Austro-Bavarian school and made his sub-commanders buy and discuss it, he started to set his sights higher. This provincial taste created his dislike of the modern 'degenerate' school that led him to sell off the majority of this period of Germany's artistic patrimony and burn the rest.

Like the rest of the Nazi hierarchy, Hitler blurred the lines between official and private property and he allocated enormous state sums towards his collection. And yet, he so identified with the Führermuseum and kept some of the paintings at his private residences (e.g. Watteau's Landscape with Figures and Vermeer's An Artist in his Studio at his home at the Berghof) that the collection can be said to have been his own. In addition to looted artworks Hitler kept an army of art dealers employed searching

Europe for him and there are 48 dealers listed in the records of the Führermuseum. The most significant were Karl Haberstock, Maria Almas Dietrich, Hans Lange, Gertenberger, Theodor Abel and Hildebrand Gurlitt. These dealers knew that anything they could find by such artists as Spitzweg, Defregger or Thoma would definitely find a new home as well as anything from the German Renaissance. Hans Posse was quite openly dismissive about the Austro-Bavarian school but he couldn't change the taste of his master.

Hitler also encouraged Nazi art and sponsored the annual exhibition in the Haus der Deutschen Kunst in Munich. He always attended and bought 200-300 works out of the 880-1,400 works exhibited. In 1938, for example, he made five trips to the exhibition, buying a total of 202 pieces and spending RM582,185. This type of art was placed in offices and various public places, but in his private residences he put Austro-Bavarian paintings or outstanding Old Masters. Of the 534 paintings in the Berghof only a couple were Nazi art. Like Stalin and the Russian Socialist Realism school Hitler was more interested in using the Nazi art for indoctrination and propaganda than for his own enjoyment.



***The Astronomer* by Jan Vermeer (1632-1675)**

Although after the war the Americans wanted to list the Sonderauftrag Linz as a criminal organisation, much of its collection was formed quasi-legally by acquisition. Spending RM163,975,000 on art was more than anyone has done, before or after, and Hitler formed the fastest and most important art collection in history. He divided up his art empire into areas of responsibility; Posse, for example, left Paris for Haverstock and concentrated on the Netherlands. Posse, in turn, delegated the Netherlands to Alois Mendl and Italy to Philipp von Hesse.

Hitler financed his acquisitions using state funds but supplemented this with his considerable income from royalties from the sale of *Mein Kampf*, which earned him RM1.5-2m per year between 1934 and 1944. Martin Bormann managed extensive real estate holdings on his behalf and industrialists like Gustav Krupp von Bohlen and Fritz Thyssen gave large donations. Various schemes such as the Sonderbriefmarken which allowed people to pay extra for postage stamps as a form of donation also brought in sizable funds (this project generated RM20,387,046 by February 1942).

Although most of the art was acquired on the open market Hitler was not averse to illegal acquisitions and put enormous pressure on Count Czernin with trumped-up tax investigations to secure the Vermeer *An Artist in his Studio* at an artificially low price. There were also 324 of the 6,000 paintings which came from Viennese Jews. Another precious Vermeer destined for Linz was the *Astronomer* from the collection of Baron Eduard de Rothschild.

In Hitler's view it was his right as conqueror to claim artworks as the spoils of victory. He removed the tapestries from Hradcany castle after a two-day visit to Prague in March 1939 and Brueghel's *The Hay Harvest* from the Czech national gallery where it was on loan from the Lobkowitz collection. Posse selected works by Raphael, Rembrandt and Leonardo from Poland and the best pieces from the 21,000 works taken by the ERR from Eastern European, Dutch and French Jews. These works were not sent to the usual depositories at Herrenchiemsee or Neuschwanstein but went directly to the special room at the Führerbau in Munich. In the early part of the war Hitler would visit the Führerbau as often as possible to enjoy his growing collection but later he had to make do with the leather-bound albums that were made up with images of the artworks.

Hitler also initiated a ritual of gift giving amongst the Nazi hierarchy, and the Nazi sub leaders rapidly realised that the gifts their leader most enjoyed were paintings, so they fell over themselves to give the best paintings they could secure. On his birthday in 1939, for example, Goebbels gave him Becchi's *Leda and the Swan* and Gauleiter Fritz Sauckel gave him

Lucas Cranach’s *Naked Venus*. Mussolini sent Hans Makart’s *Plague in Florence*, remembering that Hitler had admired it during his 1938 trip to Italy and Alfred Krupp gave Hitler a table made out of Krupp steel carved by the sculptor Erich Kuhn and decorated with Nazi insignia and laudatory inscriptions.

Hitler, like Stalin, had an eye for detail, meticulously planning every detail of the Nuremberg rallies and designing the Nazi uniforms. This was allied with a certain dilettantism that tolerated people despite their failures, shown in his continuing to buy from the dealer Maria Almas Dietrich after she sold him fakes; and not dismissing Goering after he lost his way with the Luftwaffe. Reminiscing in Spandau prison, Speer wrote, ‘Somebody ought to write on Hitler’s dilettantism some day. He had the ignorance, the curiosity and the temerity of the born dilettante ... a genius of dilettantism. He also had a profound sympathy for all dilettantes.’[18]

Corridor in Goering’s country residence Karinhall, Art works and sculptures decorate the corridor, 1938

Above all, assessing Hitler as a looter and collector of art, little is clear amidst a sea of contradictions. He was a Catholic who tried to undermine Catholicism, had a love of detail and yet a weakness for dilettantism, unleashed ‘total war’ on Europe causing the death of over 59 million people, and yet spent as much time as he could on his two passions, art and architecture. His complete self-confidence, which swayed those around him to do his bidding, became delusional by the end. There is a famous photograph of Hitler in the model room of his Berlin bunker in 1945, shortly before his suicide, sitting looking earnestly at the scale model of his planned city of Linz. Neat and tidy as ever, wearing his distinctive peaked cap and holding leather gloves in one hand, contemporaries said he was discussing changes to Linz right up until the end, when it was clear to all except him that the project would never be more than a fantasy.

The No. 2 in the Third Reich had the second-largest art collection in the Nazi hierarchy of over 1,500 paintings. Hermann Goering (1893-1946) was the Reichsmarschall, Chief of the Luftwaffe, Head of the four-year plan, Minister President of Prussia, Chief of the Reich Defence Committee, Reichstag President and the Reich hunting master (a title which particularly delighted him). Goering was born on 12th January 1893 in Rosenheim in Bavaria, the son of the Governor General of the German protectorate of South West Africa (modern day Namibia). With his father absent for long periods, Goering spent considerable time at his Jewish godfather Hermann von Epenstein’s castles of Burg Veldenstein in Bavaria and Schloss Mautendorf near Salzburg, properties he was later to inherit and refurbish with Nazi funds.

Before the First World War Goering studied Greek with the Rev. John Francis Richards in Rutland in England where he visited the nearby Burghley House, deciding it would become his after a successful German invasion of England. Burghley House, the vast Elizabethan stately home built by William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who was treasurer to Elizabeth I, is one of England’s architectural masterpieces and full of a magnificent art collection of over 1,000 paintings, and shows the scale of the ambition of the young future Nazi.

Goering and Walter Andreas Hofer, his curator, at Karinhall.

In 1914 he tried to commit suicide by cutting his wrists. On recovery he enlisted in 1915 and fought at the battle of the Somme. He was hospitalised shortly afterwards from rheumatism caught in the damp trenches. On his recovery he joined the air force where he finished the war with 22 confirmed kills. Like Hitler, he felt genuinely surprised at Germany's capitulation and when ordered to hand over his planes to the Allies in December 1918 he destroyed them.

Goering continued commercial flying and he took Count Eric von Rosen to his castle at Rockelstad near Sparreholm in 1920. Appalling weather meant Goering had to stay the night at the art-filled castle and there he met his first wife, Baroness Karin von Kantzow, Rosen's sister-in-law. Goering joined the Nazi party in 1922 and quickly took over the SA (storm division) leadership and proved a good organiser. Hitler commented, 'I liked him. I made him head of my SA. He is the only one of its heads that ran the SA properly. I gave him a dishevelled rabble. In a very short time he had organised a division of 11,000 men.'[19]

Goering was seriously wounded in the failed takeover called the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 and escaped to a hospital where he became addicted to morphine. Goering and Karin travelled around short of money and in exile before returning to join Hitler again in 1927 in Germany, where Goering was elected to the Reichstag in 1928. In 1932 he was made president of the Reichstag and remained so until 1945. With Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933, Goering could start the formation of his long-desired art collection. In 1933 he acquired a vast Prussian estate 45 miles north-east of Berlin, naming it Karinhall after his wife, who had died in October 1931 of tuberculosis. He rapidly established Karinhall as a shrine to his late wife, building an immense mausoleum for her in the grounds and transporting her body there. On the day of his second marriage to Emmy Sonnemann in 1935 Goering visited the coffin as soon as they returned to the house after the service, an act which Sonnemann accepted with remarkable grace and sensitivity.

Hitler liked his sub-leaders to collect art as it tied in with his idea that the Nazi elite were a new German aristocracy and required some of the appropriate trappings. Goering played on this, persuading Hitler that one day he would leave Karinhall to the German people as a museum. He regularly boasted that he had amassed, ‘the largest art collection in Europe owned by an individual.’

Hans Wendland, Goering’s art dealer in Switzerland.

Goering had little time for Modern Art or Hitler’s Austro-Bavarian school, preferring the German Old Masters (Cranach, Dürer and Grunewald), Italian Renaissance paintings (Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci), Dutch seventeenth-century masters (Rembrandt, Vermeer, Frans Hals, Ruysdael, de Hooch, Hobbema) and French and Spanish eighteenth-century painting (Boucher, Watteau, Fragonard and Goya). He also collected precious stones that he would keep in his pockets and remove and pass from hand to hand in meetings and when stressed. He was drawn to everything that bolstered his tenuous links to the aristocracy. His stepfather von Epenstein was Jewish and had bought his title, but Goering was determined that the numerous guests and dignitaries that visited Karinhall should be under no illusions as to Goering’s own taste and power. As the war progressed, Goering took to entertaining guests at Karinhall wearing velvet caftans, jewels and ceremonial daggers.

Two facets of Goering’s personality dominate: ‘the beer hall adventurer of 1923 and the lion of society of 1932.’[20] Goering began to amass art in the 1920s, taking bribes from companies and industrialists to finance his collecting. Lufthansa gave him RM1,000 per month and Fritz Thyssen paid for the decor and furnishing of his new apartment in the Schoenberg section of Berlin in 1929. The cost of constructing Karinhall was RM5m, paid for by the German taxpayer out of the budgets of the Prussian ministry and the new air ministry.

With a combination of bribes, government funds, contributions from his employees (withheld from their pay cheques) and his salary, Goering was able to fund a bewildering array of private residences. Besides Karinhall he had Veldenstein that he had inherited from von Epenstein; his hunting lodge at Romintern in Eastern Prussia; Mautendorf from von Epenstein again; a Berlin villa on the Leipzigstrasse that he turned into a Renaissance palazzo; a chalet at Berchtesgaden near Hitler’s Berghof; Ringenwalde, an eighteenth-century manor house near Berlin and a model farm called Gollin, also near Berlin. Goering kept artworks at all his homes but Karinhall was his showpiece, a huge Norse-style construction that had started off a modest hunting lodge but kept growing throughout the Third Reich.

As guests entered Karinhall’s great hall and walked around its long corridors they were met with a collection estimated by the American OSS service in 1945 at 1,375 paintings, 250 sculptures, and 168 tapestries. The first pictures that greeted guests were a *Madonna and Child* by Hans Memling, another *Madonna and Child* by Lochner and Vermeer's *Christ and the Adulteress*, a particular favourite of the Reichsmarschall that turned out after the war to be a fake by Han van Meergeren.

Photographs show long corridors and the large hall full of paintings hung ceiling to floor, cabinets full of jewellery and gold and silver objects, rare tapestries, porcelain, Renaissance and Baroque furniture and the best of four centuries of European culture from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century. This mix of objects and its display was very much in keeping with the fashion of the day and it mirrors the taste of the pre-war collections of Calouste Gulbenkian at Avenue d'Lena in Paris (now in a museum in Lisbon) and William Randolph Hearst at San Simeon in California (still there).

Goering maintained a large network of dealers and agents working on his behalf particularly during his moment of absolute power between 1939 and 1942, after which his star began to fade with the demise of the Luftwaffe and as the power of Bormann and Goebbels increased. Walter Andreas Hofer co-ordinated his purchases and a secretary named Gisela Limburger kept on top of the dizzyingly complicated payments and transportation requirements. The OSS report of 1945 singles out eight individuals of key importance: Sepp Angerer, the rug dealer who sourced degenerate art, Walter Bornheim, an art dealer in Munich, Kajetan Mühlmann, the plundering specialist who looted Poland and the Netherlands, Bruno Lohse, who Goering seconded to be his man on the inside in the ERR in Paris, Alois Mendl, the crafty dealer based in the Netherlands who traded with both Goering and Hitler before disappearing in Spain with many valuable paintings, Gottlieb Reber, who operated in Italy for Goering, Kurt von Behr, the leader of the main ERR commando in France, Theodor Fischer in Lausanne, who auctioned the degenerate artworks, Hans Wendland, a dealer in Switzerland and Gustav Rochlitz, the German dealer living in France who organised all the exchange deals at the ERR.

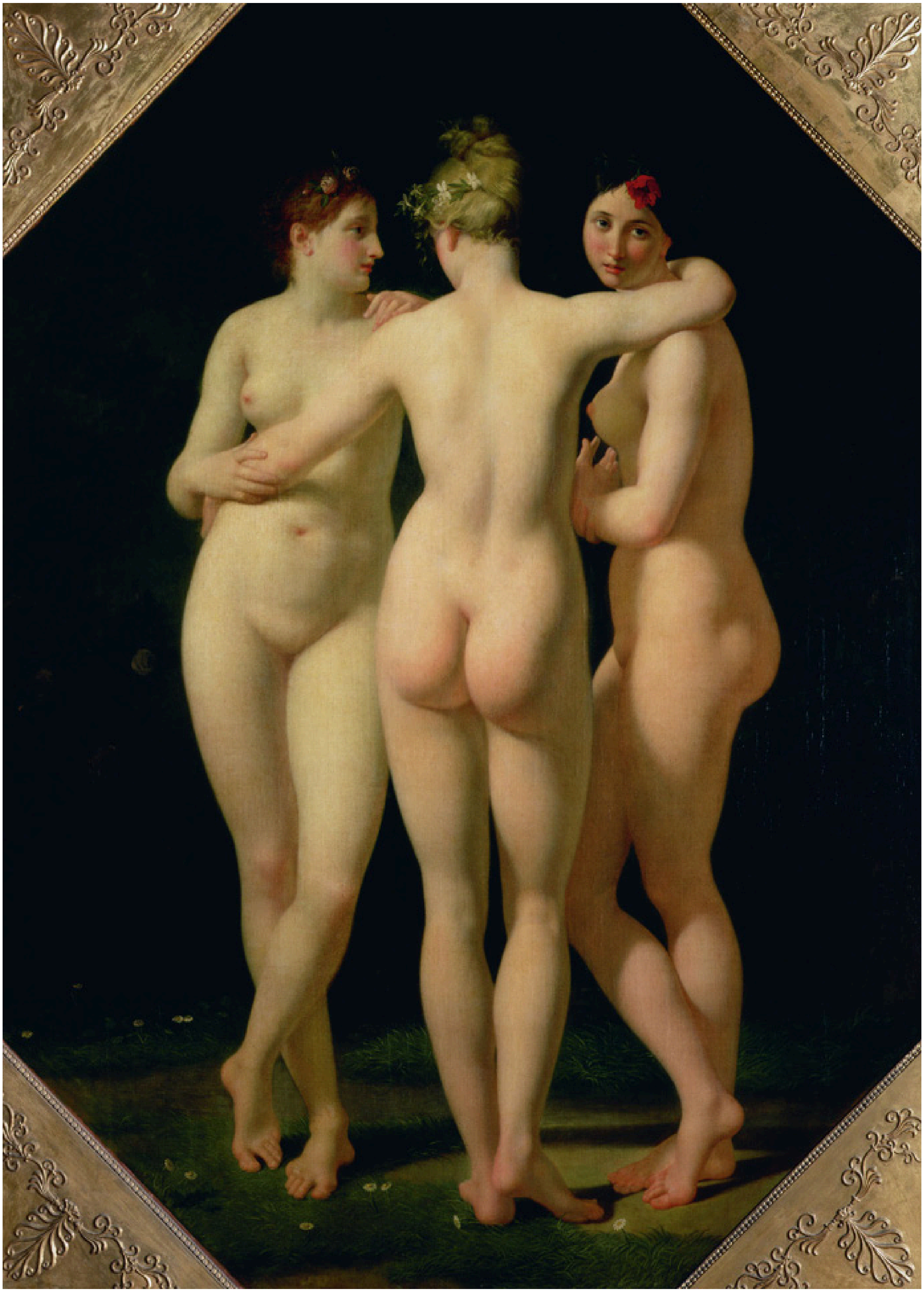
Goering liked to choose his own pictures where possible and selected 594 pieces in twenty visits to the ERR in Paris from the art confiscated from Jewish collections. He tried to cloak his actions with a semblance of legality saying he would pay for the works but payment was never forthcoming. Goering neglected to keep records of his purchases except when he traded art for profit when he showed himself to be eminently capable of careful booking and demanding his commissions down to the last RM, as, for example, when he sold four Canalettos and a Van Goyen to Reichskommissar Erich Koch and arranged a sale to Philip Reemstma, the tobacco magnate, of two Jan Steens and a Jacob Ruysdael. He also proved accomplished at arranging no less than eighteen trades of modern artworks from the ERR in Paris with Swiss dealers.

In his dealings with the art trade Goering proved himself the match of the slipperiest art dealers and he was adept at cutting deals and dealing with the complexities of different currencies, jurisdictions and exchange controls. He even brokered trades with the Louvre when in 1943 he acquired a statue called *La Belle Allemande* in exchange for old masters and Dutch landscapes.

Neuschwanstein Castle, one of the Nazis' depositories for art work.

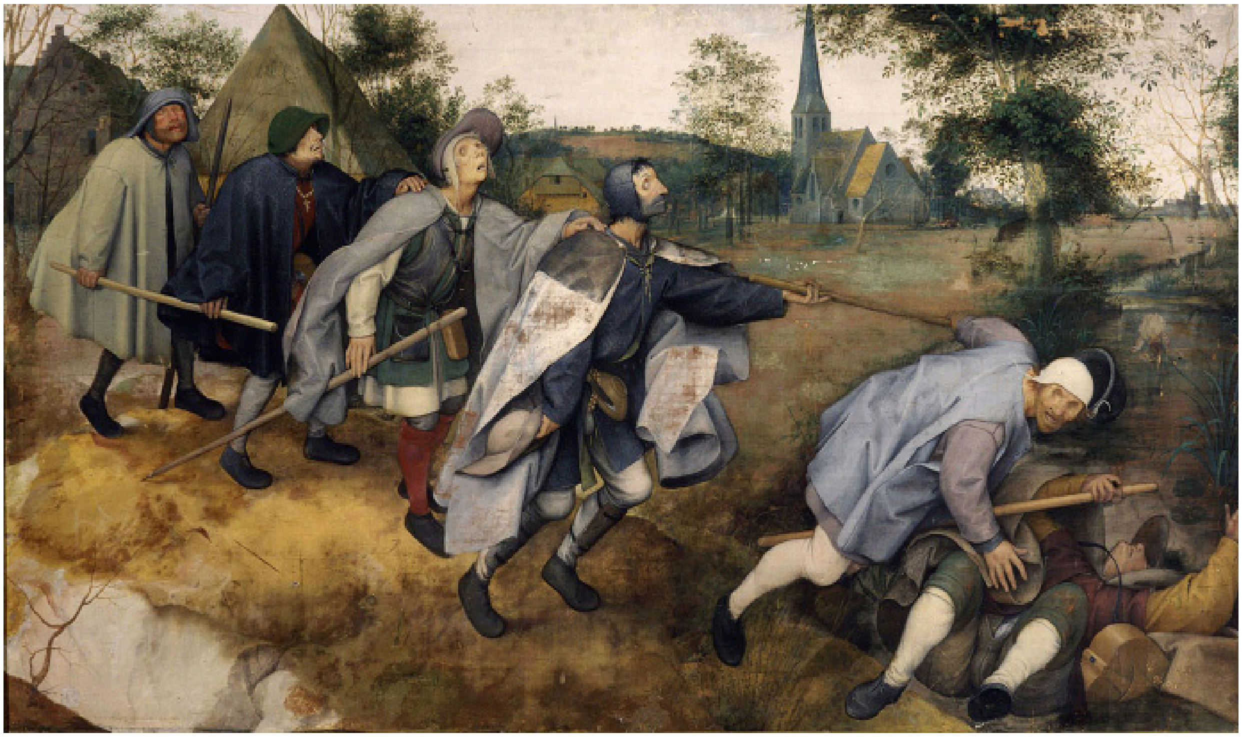
He combined the passion of a collector with the dealer's knack of buying cheaply. His subordinates often found him trying to resolve a hurdle in a difficult art trade when the Third Reich urgently needed his attention. In the summer of 1941, for example, when Hitler was launching Operation Barbarossa against Russia, Goering was in Lausanne negotiating with a Swiss art dealer to exchange a number of French Impressionists for medieval German paintings.

Goering had agreed with Hitler as early as 1933 that Karinhall would become a museum and later, under pressure from Hitler, he had formal plans drawn up that the transfer would take place on his sixtieth birthday in 1957. There is, however, little evidence that Goering really intended to leave his collection to the German state, and it is more likely that he agreed to this just to allow him to keep collecting masterpieces that could arguably have been diverted towards the Linz collection. After Goering lost Hitler's trust and ear with the demise of the Luftwaffe in 1942 he was shut out of major decision making, lost some of his power and collecting ability, and retreated more into the contemplation of his collection.



***The Three Graces*, 1797-98 by Jean-Baptiste Regnault (1754-1829).**

Goering had an eye on his future, and in order to avoid possible recriminations he shied away from art deals that he rated too hot to handle, such as the Schloss collection, in which the Vichy government joined forces with the Nazis to appropriate 332 paintings belonging to Adolph Schloss from the unoccupied zone in France. Later in the war the Hermann Goering division of the SS delivered 16 crates of masterpieces to Karinhall including Titians and Brueghel the elder's famous work *The Blind Leading the Blind*. When Goering found out they had been removed by the retreating German army from a depository at Monte Cassino and contained the treasures of the Naples museums he consulted Hitler, who agreed they couldn't be displayed at Karinhall and the crates were despatched to the flak bunker at Kurfurst in the outskirts of Berlin.



***The Parable of the Blind* (1568) by Pieter Brueghel the Elder (c. 1525/30-1569)**

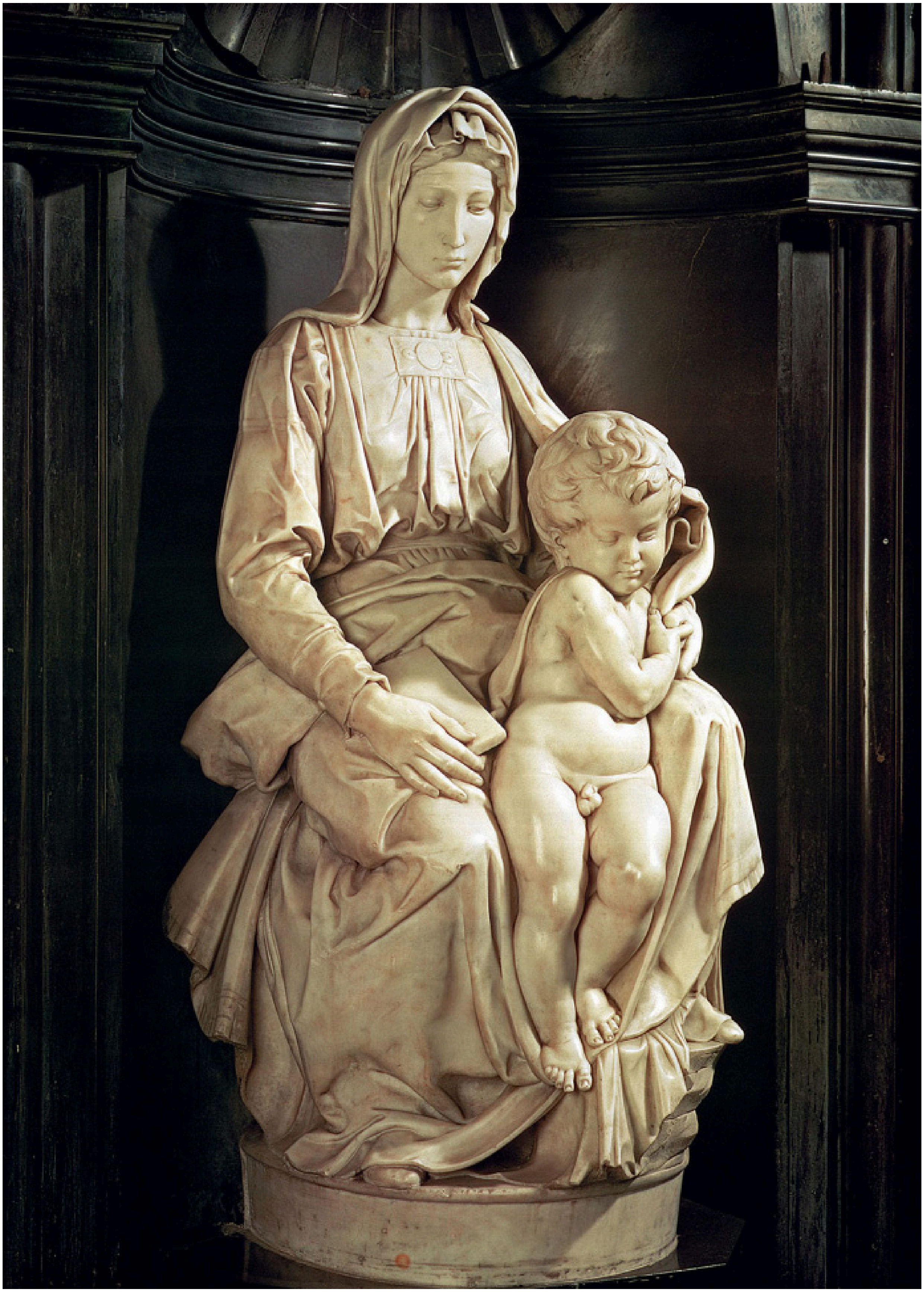
Goering was popular with his troops, who respected his achievement as a decorated combat pilot in WWI. He also had a gruff manner and a rough sense of humour that appealed to the soldiers. Brutal and determined and one of the architects of the 'Final Solution', he could, like Hitler, be quite agreeable. Sir Neville Henderson, Britain's pre-war ambassador to Germany said, 'Of all the big Nazi leaders, Hermann Goering was for me by far the most sympathetic. He was himself a typical and brutal buccaneer, but he had certain attractive qualities and I must frankly say that I had a real personal liking for him.'[21] Photographs of Goering in his aeroplane in the First World War show a big bull of a man with a thick neck and a broad and cunning face. By the 1940s the muscle had turned to fat and he was corpulent and morphine addicted.

In May 1945, the US interrogator, Major Paul Kubala wrote a report on his debrief of Goering:

> Although he has been depicted in news reports as being half mad, he gives the impression of being a highly intelligent and cunning man, with charming manners and a certain knowledge of art. He is very talkative, claiming to be a great lover of artistic works, and stating that it was his intention to transform Karinhall into a national museum, explaining 'After all, I am a Renaissance type.'[22]

A renaissance type, maybe, but with a savage edge that most people who did business with him came to see. Bruno Lohse was told he, 'would have to take the consequences' if a deal did not go through on Goering's terms and there were countless occasions where permits to leave Europe or to extract loved ones from labour camps were granted or offered for artworks as gifts or at favourable rates. Although he sponsored a tapestry factory, an art school and designed his own personal flag, which was carried by a personal standard bearer on all public occasions, he did not patronise or acquire Nazi period art and recognised how feeble most of it was.

In the final months of the war Goering moved his collection to Berchtesgaden where it was kept in secret trains in sheltered tunnels before it was found by the Americans. He blew up Karinhall, rendered it to rubble and turned himself in to the Americans, giving up to General Patch near Radstadt on 9th May 1945. He was relieved of his medals including his Grand Cross, Pilot Observers badge with diamonds, his field marshal's baton, his American .38 calibre Smith and Wesson revolver and a dagger with a runic inscription reading, "From Eric to Hermann", a gift from his first brother-in-law, Count Eric Rosen.



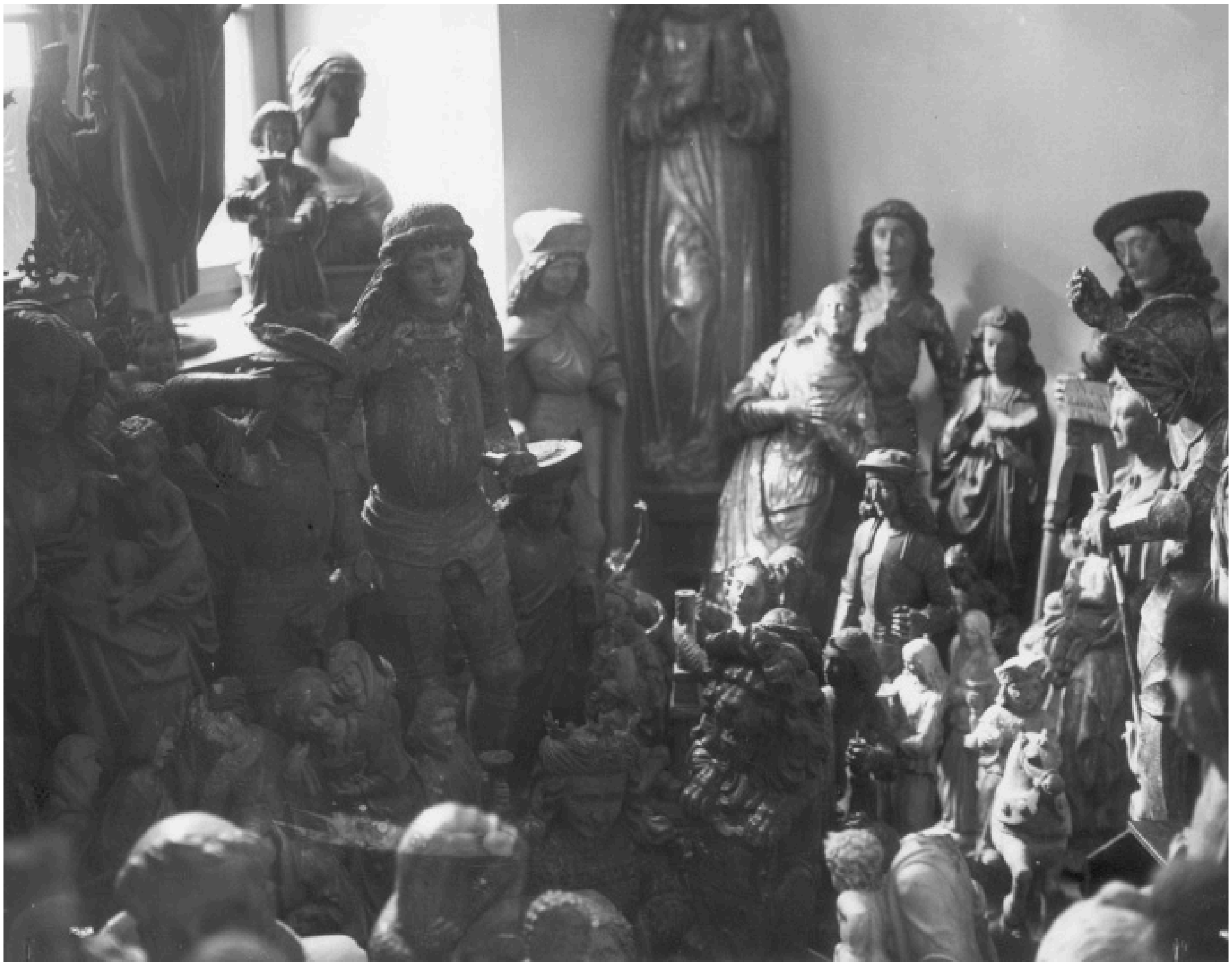
***Bruges Madonna* (*c.* 1502) Buonarroti Michelangelo (1475-1564).**

When General Patch returned to the US in June 1945, he presented the baton to President Harry Truman who kept it on his desk for a while before returning it. After General Patch's death from pneumonia in 1945 his descendants gave the dagger and the baton to the West Point Military Museum on 23rd March 1946, where they remain on view today.

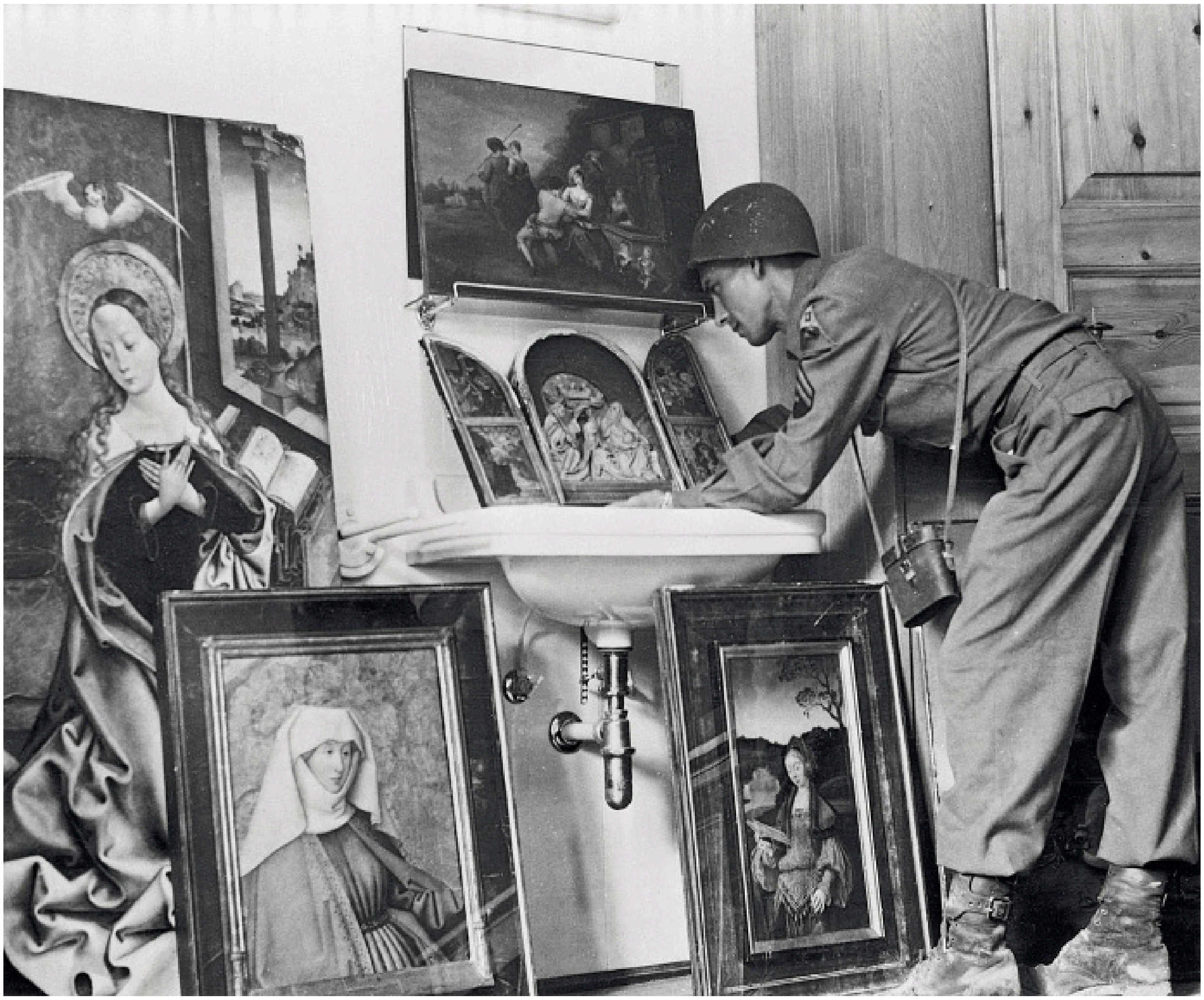
The International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg tried Goering for war crimes along with the rest of the Nazi hierarchy. As the 39 leather-bound volumes of the paintings intended for the Führermuseum were endlessly passed around as evidence of the looting, the prosecuting council said, 'Neither the British Museum, the Louvre, the Metropolitan in New York, nor the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow could present a comparable catalogue. Even if they pooled their treasures they would fall far short of the art collection that Germany had amassed from the other nations of Europe.'[23]

Goering claimed at the trial that his art had all been collected legally by acquisition but the prosecuting council read out an excerpt from a speech made by Goering to a conference of Reichskommissars for the occupied territories in 1942, 'It seemed to me to be a relatively simple matter in former days. It used to be called plundering. It was up to the party in question to carry off what had been conquered. But today things have become more humane. In spite of that, I intend to plunder and to do it thoroughly.' The former First World War fighter ace, the commander of the Luftwaffe, the second most powerful man in the Third Reich, the possessor of the largest private collection of art in Europe, the man deeply involved in the construction of the 'Final Solution' and the man jointly responsible for the death of over 50 million people, was found guilty on all counts and sentenced to death by hanging. Somehow, Goering managed to gain access to a cyanide capsule and he committed suicide on 15th October 1946, a few hours before his appointed execution.

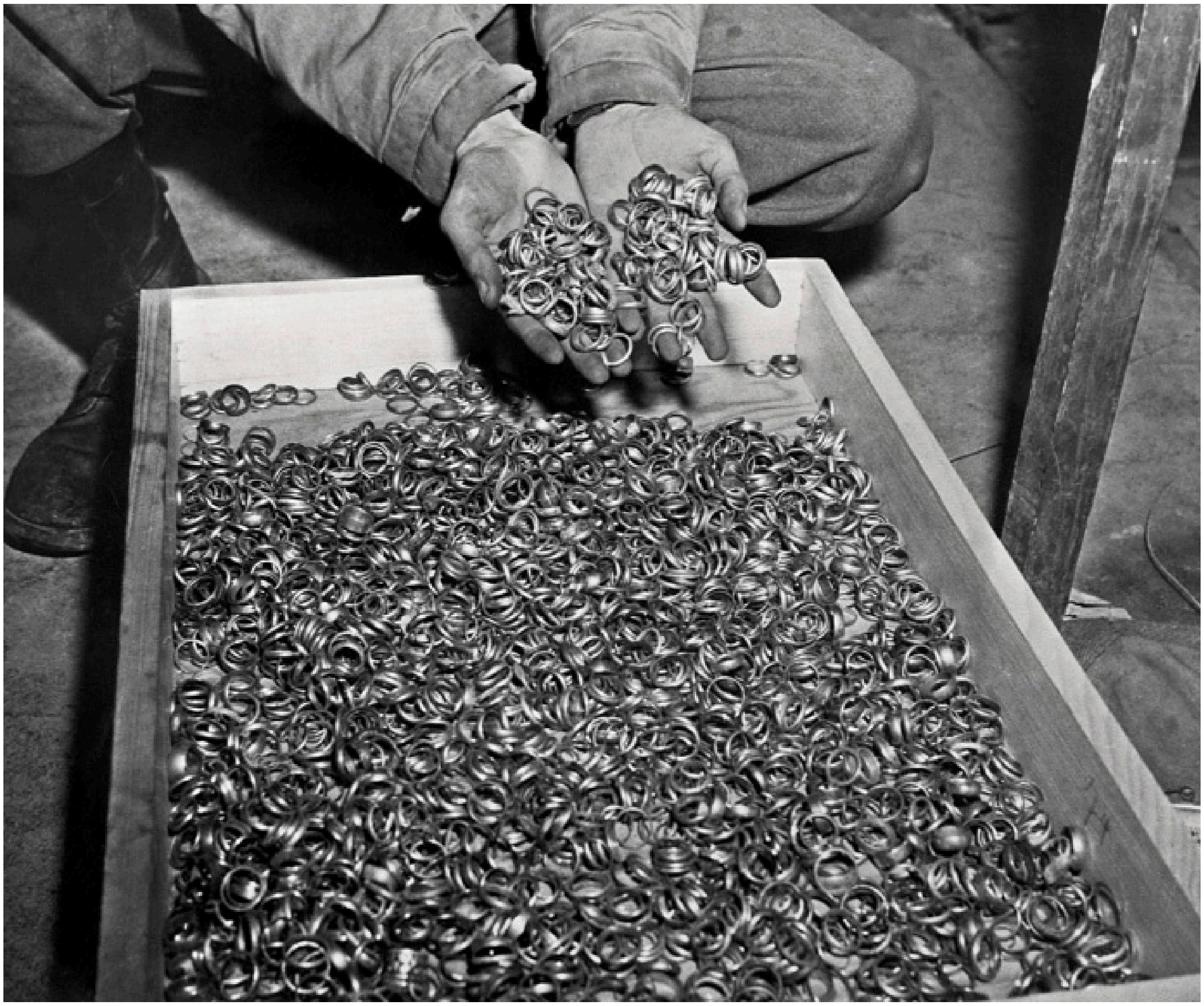
Part of an estimated 100 tons of gold bullion hidden in a salt mine near Merkers, Germany: and discovered by U.S. Army troops of General George S. Patton on 7 April 1945.



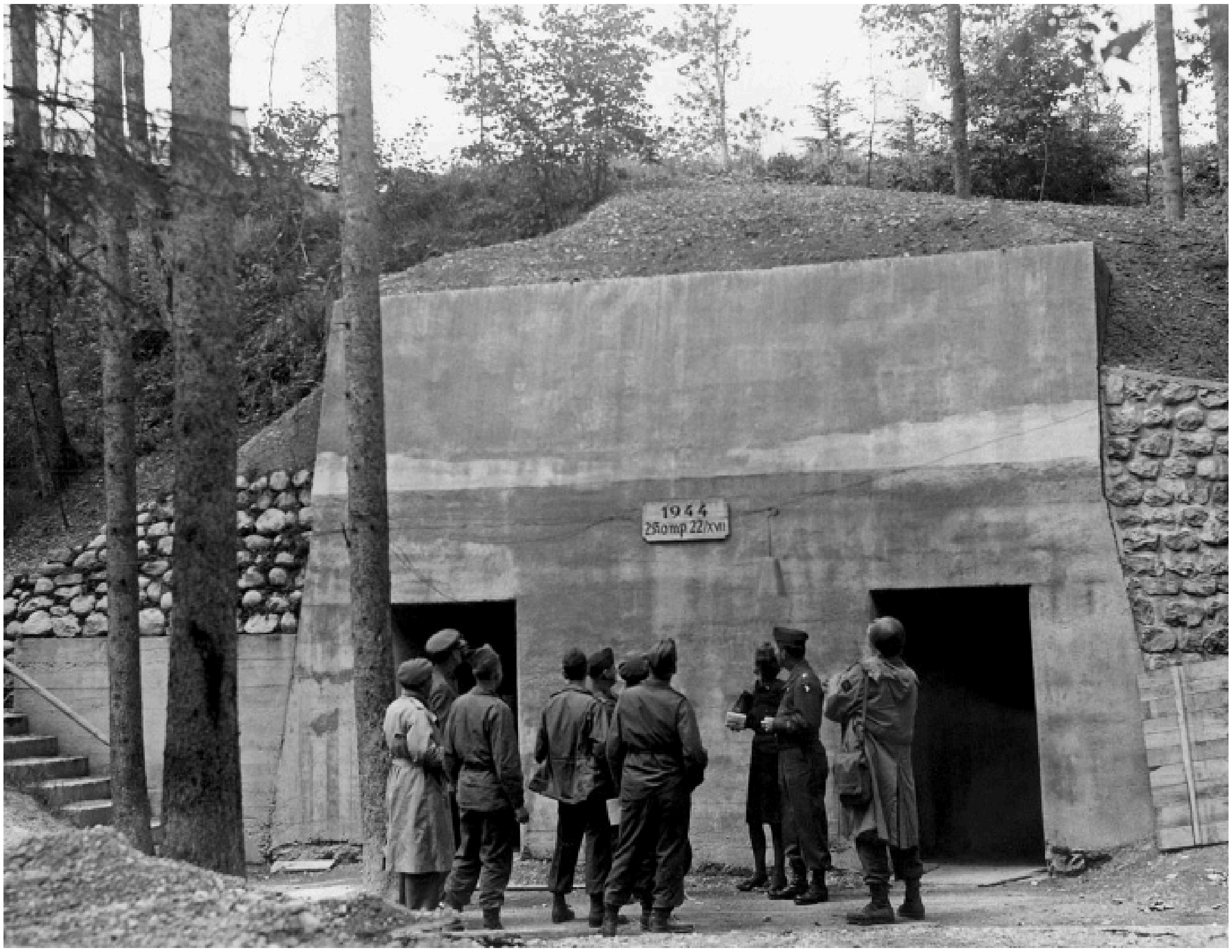
7 May 1945: a room filled with antique statues many looted from churches by Hermann Goering.



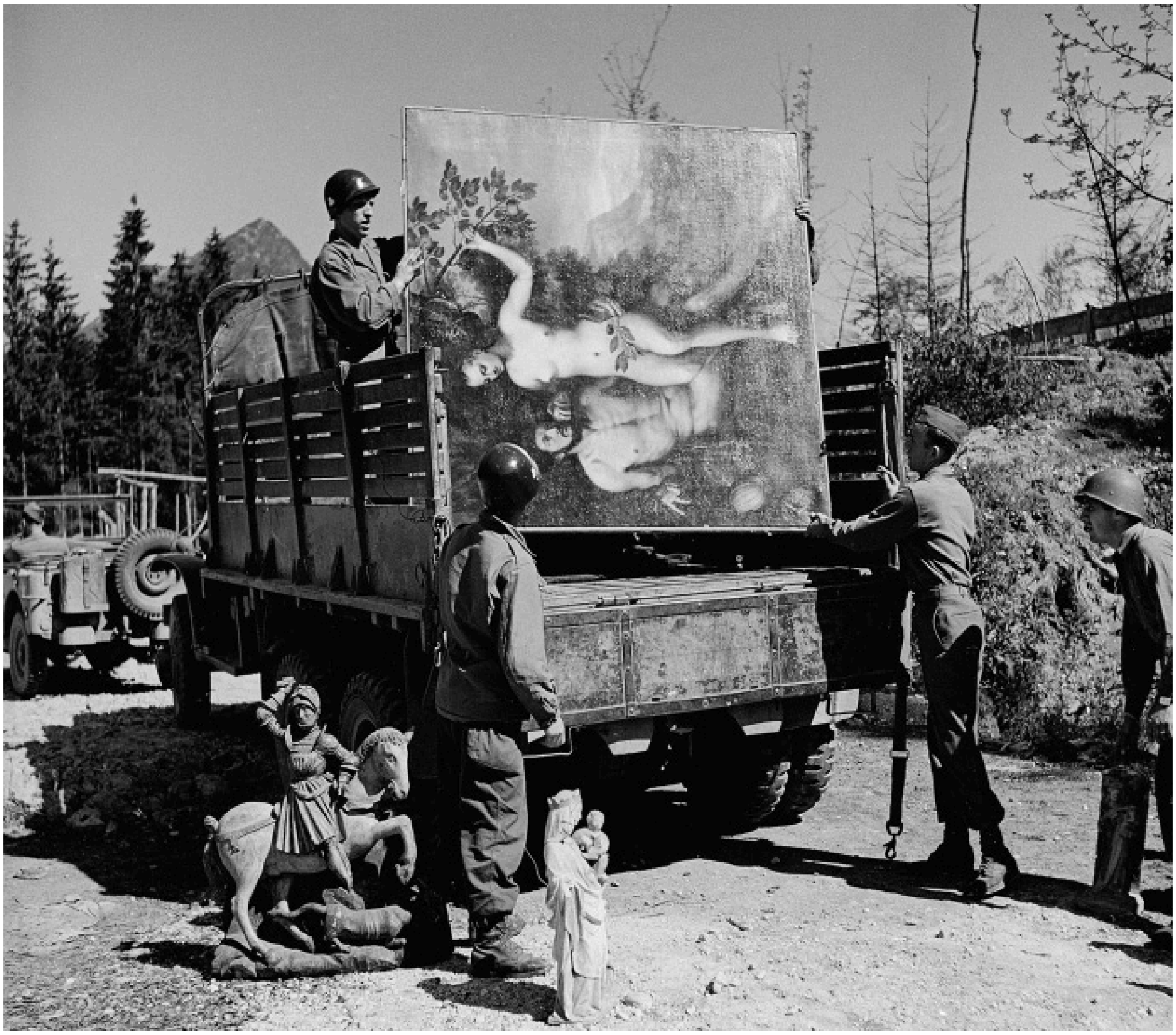
29 May 1945: an American soldier examines a valuable work of art resting on a wash basin in a house where loot was recovered.



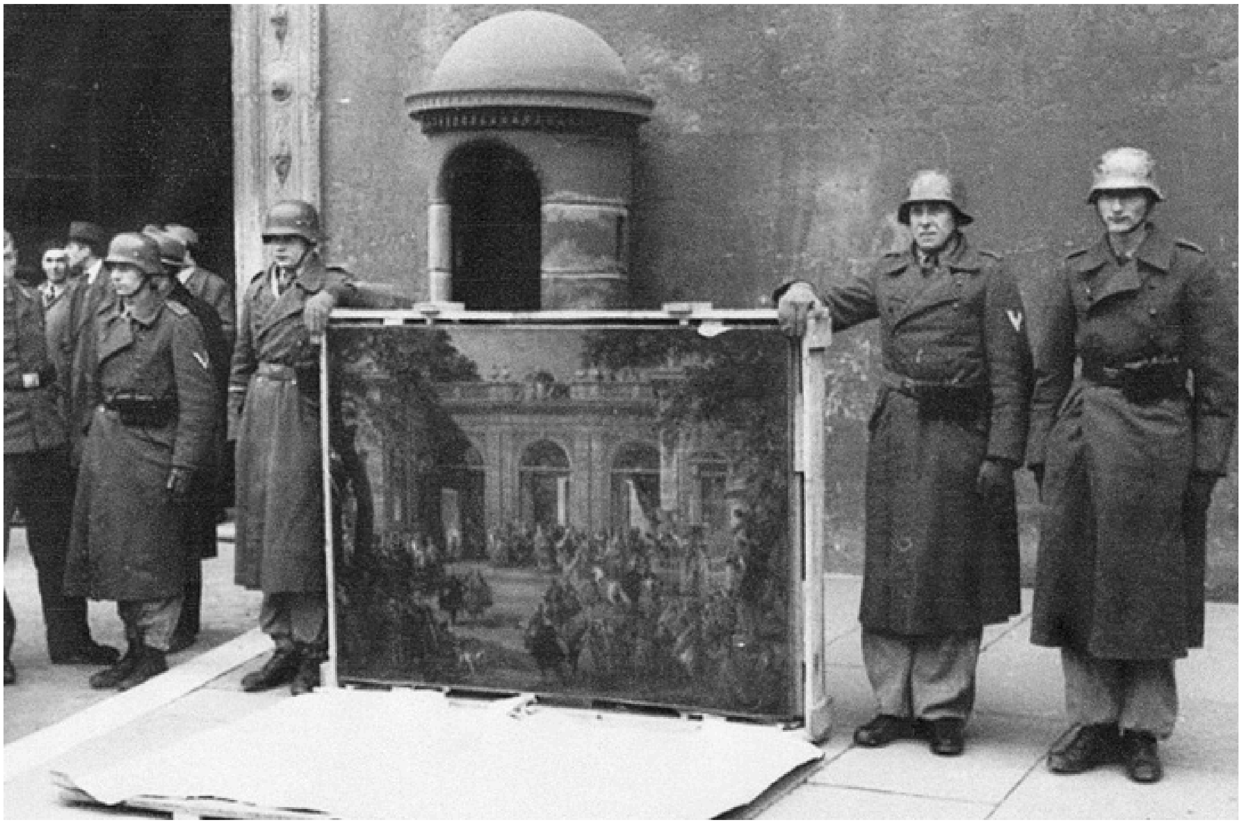
Thousands of wedding rings were found by 1st U.S. Army in a cave adjoining the Buchenwald concentration camp, near Weimar, Germany, May 1945. German SS guards removed them from the dead bodies of their victims in order to salvage the gold.



Herman Goering revealed to the U.S. military government the location of his secret treasure cave built into the mountain side at Konigsee, a beauty spot near Berchtesgaden.



American soldiers loading a truck with a painting of Adam and Eve and various sculptures discovered in a cave at Winterstein, Germany in May 1945.



Rome, Italy, 4 January 1944. German soldiers of the 'Herman Goering division' posing near the main entrance of Palazzo Venezia with a picture taken from the National Museum of Naples Picture Gallery (today at the Museo do Capodimonte) before the city was liberated, during a propaganda ceremony aimed to prove that the artworks were 'devolved' to the RSI.

In the last days of the war the Nazis were frantically moving their artworks into more secure locations and away from the rapidly advancing Russian and joint US and British forces. As the Führerbau, the specially constructed room in Munich, had filled up in late 1942, other secure locations had to be found for the art that continued to pour in from around the Nazi empire.

The three new main depositories selected were Schloss Thurntal near Kremsmunster, a monastery at Hohenfurth in Czechoslovakia near the Austrian border, and Schloss Neuschwanstein near Fussen in Bavaria. The first of these to receive art was Schloss Thurntal, which, between August 1941 and November 1943 took in 1,732 paintings, including the confiscated collection of Baron Cassel from the South of France of mainly late nineteenth-century French paintings. When Thurntal was full consignments were sent to the Monastery at Hohenfurth which housed large numbers of items from the Rothschild collections, over 1,000 pieces of silver from the David-Weill collection and parts of the Mannheimer collection.

The largest of these depositories was Schloss Neuschwanstein (literally 'New Swan Stone Place') near Fussen, the nineteenth-century Bavarian hilltop fantasy castle built by Ludwig II as a homage to Richard Wagner, which ultimately was almost full to overflowing with assorted art treasures. By 1944 it contained 21,903 artworks including over 6,000 paintings from 203 collections, of which most were Jewish confiscations. In the fall of 1945 when Major Edward. E. Adams of the US army was tasked with repatriating the art from Neuschwanstein he found half the contents still in their original packing cases and crates with 'Task Force Rosenberg' stencilled on their sides. These he knew had come from France and so he didn't unpack them but merely shipped them to Paris via the Munich Collection Point.

In his report Adams wrote, 'Our preliminary survey of the castle took nearly an entire day. The cache turned out to be about 6,000 fine paintings as well as sculpture, silver, archaeological relics, antique tapestries, furniture, oriental carpets and a large collection of rare books. Half of it was in its original crates. The rest was stored in orderly racks or bins in locked rooms.'[24] Adams filled 41 freight cars with the contents of the castle and the best pictures such as Regnault's *Three Graces* and masterpieces by Fragonard and Boucher were immediately put on exhibition at the Jeu de Paume on reaching Paris.

As the threat from Allied bombers increased in 1944 the Nazis also moved items to lesser depositories such as Schloss Kogl at St Georgen in Attergua, Schloss Weesenstein near Dresden (found by the Red Army), which contained the card index of the items intended for Linz amongst the treasures of the Dresden museums, Schloss Steiersberg near Wiener Neustadt, which contained the Lanckoronski collection from Poland; and the monastery at Buxheim, which was used for 200 paintings looted from Russia. Collections from German museums were moved underground with the contents of Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Cologne, Heidelberg and Mannheim going to Kochendorf and Vienna's collection, including Titians, Dürers, Rembrandts and Brueghels, to Bad Ischl.

But by far the largest of the final depositories was that at the salt mines of Alt Aussee in Upper Austria. The salt mines there had been mined since Roman times and the site was chosen by Hitler because the vast network of tunnels and caverns was deep enough to resist the block-buster bombs and its cleanliness and dryness was perfect for the storage of artworks. In 1944 convoys of trucks started to arrive from the Führerbau in Munich with the contents of the Linz museum co-ordinated in an evacuation under Hans Reger who had run the Führerbau since its inception. From May to October most of the contents of the Führerbau, plus additional masterpieces from a host of other storage areas, had arrived, comprising over 10,000 paintings (including the van Eyck altarpiece from Ghent), 68 pieces of sculpture (including Michelangelo's *Madonna and Child* from Bruges) and thousands of drawings, prints and coins.

However, in a chain of events that has never been properly reconstructed, in addition to the crates of artworks, there also arrived at the mine a number of heavy crates stencilled with the inscription 'marble - do not drop' which were distributed at strategic points. The artworks, some of the finest masterpieces in Europe, may have been safe from allied bombing but they were now under threat from Nazi demolition. It is unclear if Hitler himself gave the orders for these explosives to be laid in the Alt Aussee mine, as the chain of orders was drafted with typical Nazi ambivalence. Gauleiter Eigruber received an order from Martin Bormann, Hitler's secretary, to ensure that the treasures came to no harm but also that they did not fall into the hands of the enemy. There seems little doubt that Eigruber, a vicious and unstable character who was later hanged for war crimes in the courtyard of Landsberg prison on 28th May 1946, interpreted this to mean destroy the mine contents rather than let the enemy recover them.

A local girl, who Eigruber had taken as a mistress, learned of the plan to blow the mine and told the local resistance movement. With the help of a German art expert who had worked on the treasures as they entered the mine, and who was horrified by the plan, the resistance managed, in the last chaotic days of the war to block the entrance to the mine with a series of controlled explosions before Eigruber's men could set off the bombs. Almost immediately afterwards an American infantry division arrived and secured the area.

Germany surrendered in Italy on 29th April 1945, in Western Europe on 7th May and to the Soviets on 8th May. As the Soviet army and US and British forces rushed across Europe to secure territory they started to come across vast caches of looted art and the scale of German looting gradually began to emerge. There were at least 200 major caches of art in mines, castles and monasteries and countless smaller caches in barns, factories and churches. Both sides had to make some quick decisions as to how to deal with this vast quantity of art and the next chapter of WWII looting began.

1 Simon, Matila, *The Battle of the Louvre: The Struggle to Save French Art in World War II,* Hawthorn, New York, 1971, p. 30.

2 Petroupoulos, Jonathan, *Art as Politics in the Third Reich,* University of North Carolina Press, 1996, p. 83.

3 *Ibid.,* p. 108.

4 Letter from Hofer located in the Paul Rosenberg archives, New York.

5 Feliciano, Hector, *The Lost Museum,* Basic Books, New York, 1995, p. 137.

6 Schwarz, Paul, *This Man Ribbentrop,* Messner, New York, 1943, p. 220.

7 *Ibid.,* p. 221.

8 Petroupoulos, *op. cit.,* p. 115.

9 *Ibid.,* p. 116.

10 *Ibid.,* p. 117.

11 Edsel, Robert M., *Rescuing Da Vinci,* Laurel Publishing, 2006, p. 124.

12 Hitler, Adolf, *Hitler's Table Talk,* Oxford University Press, 1941-1944.

13 Toland, John, *Adolf Hitler, The Definitive Biography,* Doubleday, 1991, pp. 12 and 13.

14 Rosenbaum, R., *Exploring Hitler, The Search for the Origins of Evil,* Macmillan, 1998, p. 2.

15 Chamberlin, Russell, *Loot, the Heritage of Plunder,* Thames and Hudson, 1983, p. 152.

16 *Ibid.,* p. 152.

17 *The Week, The Best of British and Foreign Media,* 13th December, 2008, p. 8.

18 Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 157.

19 Hitler, *op. cit.,* p. 168.

20 Irving, David, *Goering, a Biography,* Macmillan, London, 1989.

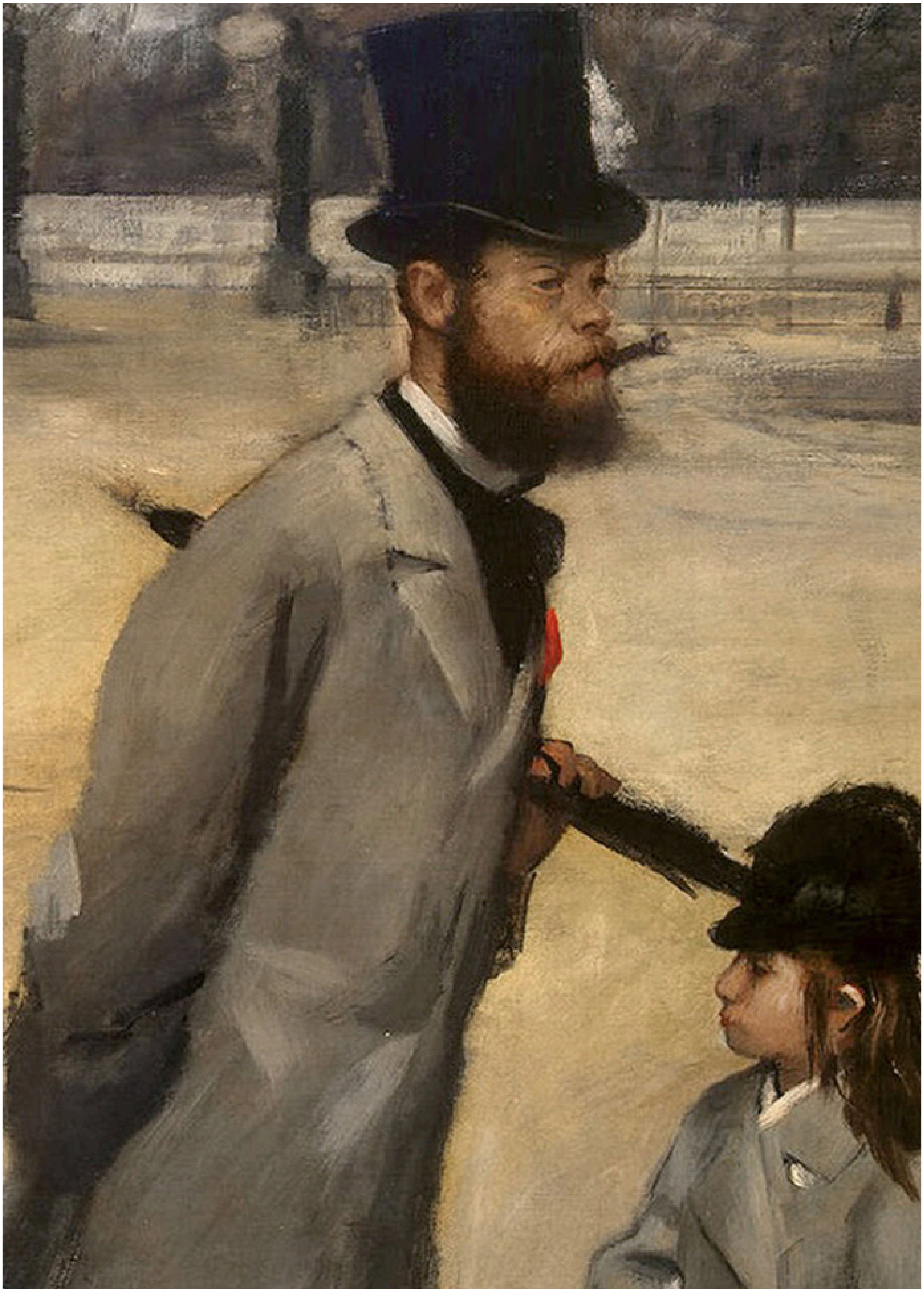
21 Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 160.

22 *Ibid.,* p. 164.

23 Harris, Whitney, *Tyranny on Trial, The Evidence at Nuremberg,* Southern Methodist University, 1954, p. 139.

24 Chamberlin, *op. cit.,* p. 175.

13 - 1945, the Soviets and Stalin



Detail: *Place de la Concorde* (1875) by Edgar Degas.

> ‘In Berlin, on Museum Island, in the cellars of the big museums (Pergamon, Kaiser Friedrich Museum) and in the New Mint, masterpieces of antique and Egyptian art, art of the Renaissance and Byzantine epochs is stored... It is very necessary to remove to the USSR the paintings, the sculptures, and the collection of coins stored there among some thousands of the artworks. Such enrichment will make it possible for our museums to be on the same level as the best museums in the world.’
>
> - Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Voloshin, acting head of the Berlin Trophy Brigade, 1945.[1]

At the end of WWII the Russian and Allied armies converged in Berlin. On 1st May 1945 the Soviet advance halted along the eastern bank of the Elbe River in view of the Americans on the other side. The officers were under clear orders to keep their distance. Although as allies they had collectively smashed the Wehrmacht into submission, the Russians viewed the Americans as the bastion of the capitalist West and the Americans viewed the Russians as revolutionary communist upstarts.

The cold war was to last another 40 years. From the 4th to the 11th of February, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Premier Joseph Stalin had met at Yalta in the Crimea and thrashed out an agreement for European post-war reorganisation. The conference had been preceded by the Tehran conference of 1943. A previous agreement was ratified to divide Germany into three zones of occupation: for the USA, Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Berlin, although in the Russian sector, would also be divided into three sectors and the wall between the USA and the Soviet sectors became a cold war symbol until it was pulled down in 1989.

In general, the Americans behaved in a humane way towards the captured German soldiers and the German civilians. They set up a specific unit, the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Program (known as the MFAA), to rescue as much of the looted artwork and contents of museums as possible and return it to its place of origin. The Russians, however, crushed refugee columns under their tanks, raped an estimated three million women and embarked on a trail of pillaging, looting and destruction. The Red Army commanders disliked the Germans as much as the Red Army soldiers did and did little to control the looting and rape. The playwright

Zakhar Agranenko, whilst serving as an officer of marine infantry in East Prussia, wrote in his diary, ‘Red Army soldiers don’t believe in individual liaisons with German women... nine, ten, twelve men at a time - they rape them on a collective basis.’[2]

The Red Army battles in the streets of Berlin during the Fall of Germany in 1945.

Over 7 million refugees fled in front of the terrifying Russian advance. Hitler, wild and deranged in his bunker, ordered that the Wehrmacht were not to waste resources aiding civilians, so many women and children simply froze or starved to death.

The differing responses towards the defeated Germans by the Russians and Americans can be explained partly by their different philosophies and partly by their varied experiences during the war. Philosophically, the Americans believed in showing compassion and mercy towards the vanquished, whereas the Russians, adhered more to the kill or be killed style of warfare. They had neither expected nor received any mercy from the Germans, and now they wanted revenge.

Many of the Russians who arrived in Berlin had fought at Stalingrad or Leningrad against a deadly Wehrmacht and felt as if they had lived through the Apocalypse. Many said later they could not imagine how they were still alive. Russians live for the moment, spend their money when they have it, and throw a party at any excuse because they have no belief in the future. As the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam said in 1933, '*My zhivem, pod soboyu ne chuya strany*' (We live, not feeling the ground under our feet).

American soil had only been attacked once, by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor on 7th December 1941, sinking 11 US battleships and killing 2402. Russia had suffered a full-scale invasion on 2nd June 1941. Operation Barbarossa, the largest invasion in history had involved 4.5 million Axis troops along a front of 1800 miles. The Germans had behaved with brutality towards the Russians who they regarded as a Slavic sub-species. Towns and villages were flattened, refugees ignored and Soviet prisoners left to freeze or starve. By 1945 there were 25 million Russians homeless and 25 million dead. The Russians wanted revenge. However, the soldiers raped Belorussian, Russian and Ukrainian women that had been released from slave labour in Germany with equal ferocity, undermining the Soviet theory that the widespread practice of rape was for revenge.

Winston Churchill, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin together after negotiations at the Yalta Conference of 1945

The palaces around St Petersburg such as Tsarskoe Selo and Peterhof had been gutted before they were torched; the churches of Pskov, Novgorod and Kiev were blown up and the cities, towns and villages of Belorussia and Ukraine flattened; libraries and museums in Kharkov, Minsk and elsewhere were emptied. 3.5 million Soviets died in labour camps and many more were forced into slavery, tortured in concentration camps or left to starve. The Jewish population suffered particularly badly and in Lithuania and Ukraine they were completely eradicated.

The Soviets had instigated a ‘scorched earth’ policy and destroyed much of Russia themselves, but, by 1945, this was forgotten and the Germans blamed for everything. An order had been given by Stalin in November 1941, ‘destroy and burn out all populated areas behind German lines situated at a distance of 40-60 kilometres behind the front line and to a distance of 20-30 kilometres on the right and left sides of the roads.’[3] In a 1993 interview, Anatoly Kuchumov, curator of the Tsarskoe Selo museums outside Leningrad, stated that the Catherine Palace had not been burned by the Nazis but destroyed by bombardment by the Soviet air force. Red Army commanders were ordered to view Soviet cities, towns and villages occupied by the Nazis as enemy territory.

The Soviet authorities in the pre-war period had also caused more destruction in the cities of Belorussia, Ukraine and Russia than the Germans managed. In Moscow countless churches and monasteries had been destroyed, including Kazan Cathedral on Red Square, built in 1625 to commemorate the liberation of Moscow from the Poles. The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, built in 1883 to commemorate victory over Napoleon, was also destroyed, as well as the Ascension Nunnery and the Chudov Monastery. Country estates were looted and burned or turned into prisons or dachas for the Soviet elite. Thousands of churches were blown up or turned into stables, clubs or warehouses.

Georgy Malenkov (1902-1988) was responsible for confiscating artworks and valuables from the Soviet occupied territories.

Nikolai Voznesensky (1903-1950), head of Gosplan, the planning agency for the Soviet economy.

As the Russians advanced towards Berlin, the German army, many of whom had fought in Russia, decided to fight to the death rather than surrender, making the battles leading up to Berlin particularly brutal. 'We are lost,' a German non-commissioned officer conceded in January 1945, 'but we will fight to the last man.' They knew that capture meant death or, at best, a miserable life in a Siberian labour camp as a 'Stalinpferd', a 'Stalin horse.' 'We no longer fought for Hitler, or for National Socialism, or for the Third Reich,' wrote a seasoned Alsatian veteran of the Grossdeutschland Division, 'or even for our fiancées or mothers or families trapped in bomb-ravaged towns. We fought for simple fear…We fought for ourselves, so that we wouldn't die in holes filled with mud and snow; we fought like rats.'[4]

The Allies were surprised when the Soviets asked them to agree that Germany should pay the USSR US$10bn to compensate for the damage to their country by the Germans, but agreed in exchange for Soviet concessions. That the Allies agreed to this figure, even though they did not believe it feasible, has been used by the Soviets ever since to justify the legality of their art looting and their removal of all movable German infrastructure.

The Allies insisted that the Allied Commission for Reparations should be responsible for a more detailed discussion. When the Commission did debate the issue later, the Russians were required to specify what they had already removed from Germany. When they refused (because of the scale of their looting), the Commission did not officially ratify the original agreement. The Allies have used this to argue that Soviet looting was illegal. The Americans naively believed that, because the Soviet Government recognised the signature of the Tsarist government on the Hague Convention of 1899 and 1907, they would eventually return Germany's treasures to her museums.

With the agreement of the Allies on Soviet reparations, Stalin moved immediately and on 25th February 1945, the State Committee of Defence established the Special Committee on Germany which, headed by Georgy Malenkov, was made responsible for the confiscation of valuables and artworks from the Soviet-occupied territories. Stalin stacked the board with the Soviet elite of that period including: Lieutenant General Vakhitov (head of the Main Trophy Department), General Andrei Khrulev (head of the Home Front of the Red Army), Nikolai Voznesensky (head of Gosplan, the planning agency for the Soviet economy), and General Nikolai Bulganin (deputy head of the Commissariat of Defence).

The most influential figure on the committee was Voznesensky, who had committed the USSR to 'total war', diverting the entire resources of the

Soviet economy to defeating the Nazis. Voznesensky was as effective at denuding Germany of her treasures. He lasted until 1950 when Stalin had him executed.

Igor Grabar, Russian Impressionist artist who proposed the idea of restocking the Russian museums with art works and treasures looted by the Germans.

The Special Committee was given enormous power and Stalin signed many of the orders personally. Special trophy brigades were headed up by art historians, museum curators and artists and allocated areas of the occupied territories to denude. Art historians were given a ‘military rank corresponding to their position’ and the Brigade’s mission was the, ‘participation in selection and transportation to Moscow of trophy property for cultural organisations.’[5] Musicians, theatre directors, cultural bureaucrats, artists, museum curators and art historians found themselves in uniform with fresh travel documents, heading for the front in a matter of days. Yevgeny Sushenko, a musician with the State Symphony Orchestra of the USSR; Boris Filippov, director of the Moscow Drama Theatre; curators of the Pushkin Museum in Moscow such as Lev Kharko and Andrei Chegodayev, and Andrei Belokopitov, manager of the Moscow Art Theatre were rapidly mobilised and sent to Germany.

The idea to compensate Russian losses and restock Russian museums with treasures looted by the Germans was first proposed by Igor Grabar in the spring of 1943. Grabar was an accomplished Russian Impressionist, a member of the World of Art Group, and his famous snow scenes, whilst derivative of Monet and Courbet, still maintain a Russian sensitivity. He was a political survivor who both thrived in tsarist times and became an important part of the Soviet art machine, heading the Tretyakov Gallery in the 1920s and winning a Stalin prize in 1941.

Grabar wrote to the head of the Extraordinary State Commission, Nikolai Shvernik:

> Because the matter of collecting equivalents [artworks equivalent in importance to those lost by Soviet Museums] in certain cases in compensation for artworks removed or destroyed by the GFO [German Fascist occupiers] was settled positively by the ESC [Extraordinary State Commission] of the CPC [Council of People’s Commissars] of the USSR, I think it is timely to establish now a special division of the ESC to make up lists of objects in the museum collections of Germany, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Romania, and Finland that could be named as eventual equivalents. Business trips abroad wouldn’t be necessary for the conduct of this work because complete copies of the catalogues of all European museums are in the libraries of some soviet art historians,

> and their own notes contain complete information about these museums.[6]

Grabar recommended himself, Sergei Troinitsky, former Director of the Hermitage and Viktor Lazarev, former curator of paintings at the Pushkin Museum to oversee the list. Shvernik forwarded the proposal on to Vladimir Makarov, head of the Culture Department of the Extraordinary State Commission, who also approved the idea, and Grabar's plan became reality. Describing Soviet losses was not easy since Minsk, Kiev, and the palaces outside Leningrad, Pskov and Novgorod were still occupied by the Germans.

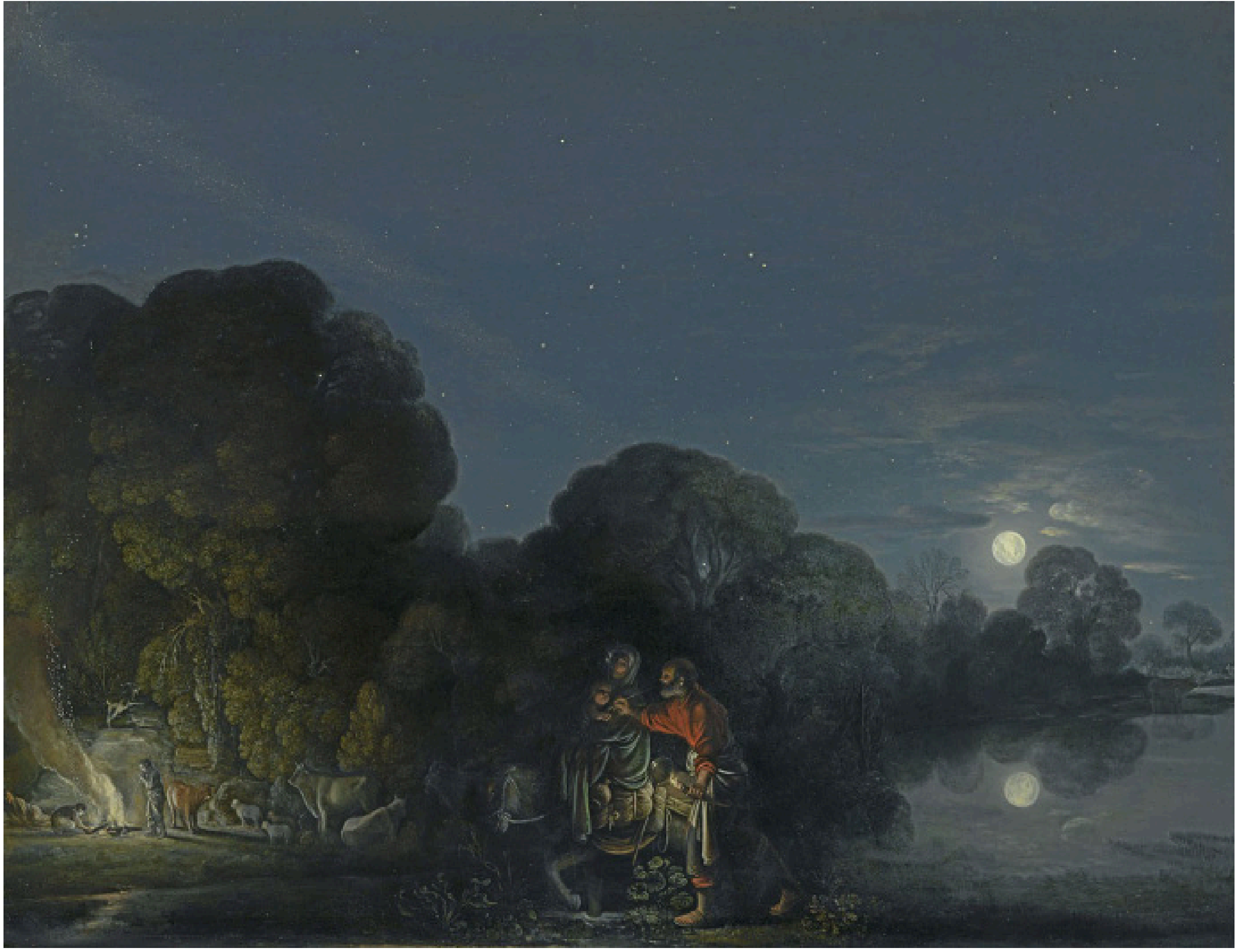
Grabar and his team had frequent meetings through 1943 debating what should be on the list:

> We need equivalents in all fields. All this must be divided among people who know German and Western European museums... we still think that Romania, Hungary and Finland are included... Talking about Germany and Austria, I think that in any case we must not make claims to those exhibits of German museums that are national monuments to Germany [an intention quickly forgotten when the actual looting started]. It's not as important for us to receive German artworks as to receive those objects they had time to gather around the world. They had time to collect a lot of French, Italian, and Spanish valuables.[7]

Grabar was realistic that Soviet museums had exaggerated their losses. Provincial curators often believed their works to be by great artists when in fact they were just copies. Historians argued over valuations. Nikolai Belekhov, head and chief architect of the State Inspectorate on the Preservation of Monuments of Leningrad argued that Ilya Repin's Zaporozhian Cossacks Write a Letter to the Turkish Sultan was worth a staggering US$1,425,500 because of its national importance and political correctness. Grabar, however, who spoke German and was well travelled in Europe, knew that Russian art was ignored by the West and had little value outside Russia. Grabar and Lazarev both argued that valuation should be based on real market prices, but none of the committee had any experience of Western art market valuations. The value of Soviet losses needed to be established so that when German artworks were removed there was some legality to the reparations.

Grabar concluded that, 'The greatest artworks from the museums of Germany and its allies are being selected.' He wanted to establish a super-museum in Moscow, 'It seems in Moscow there will be a museum whose equal never existed in the world' echoing Hitler's plans for the Linz Museum. The idea of this museum appealed to the Soviet elite, including Stalin and Sergei Makarov, the director of the Pushkin Museum. Mikhail Khrapchenko, head of the Arts Committee of the Council of People's Commissars, drafted a letter to Molotov, deputy head of the Council and Stalin's No. 2:

> The German-fascist barbarians, who tied to annihilate Russian culture and destroyed many famous examples of Russian art, must be held responsible for all their crimes. The museums of the Axis countries are full of wonderful masterpieces, which must be given to the Soviet Union as compensation. All valuables received from the Axis countries must be concentrated in one place and can play the role of a perfect memorial dedicated to the glory of Russian arms.[8]



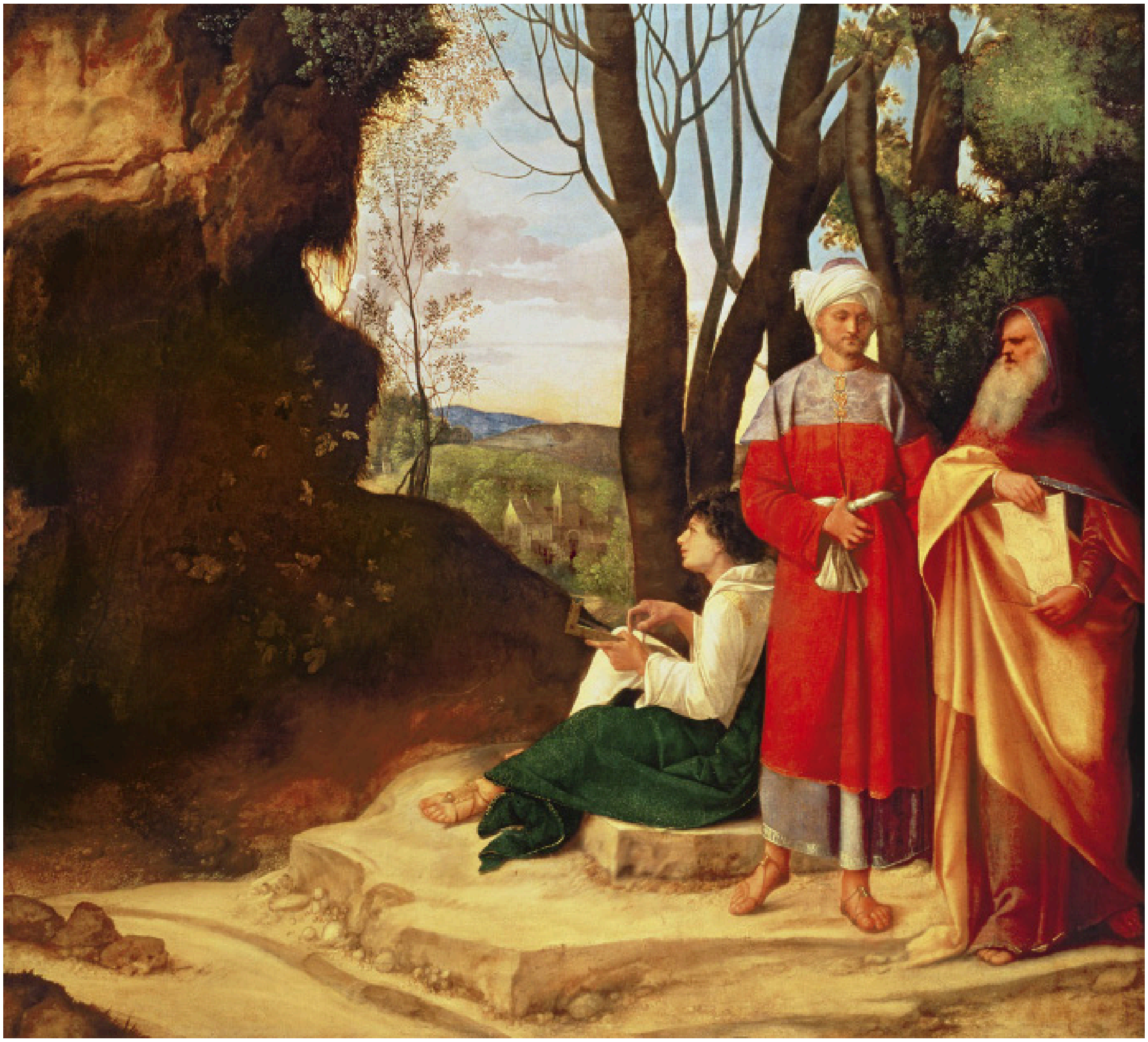
The flight into Egypt **(1609) by Adam Elsheimer (1510-1610).**

The final list included works from Italy, Romania, Hungary, Austria and Germany, but there was little optimism about receiving reparations from

Italy, which had left the Axis camp. Thirty-five paintings were chosen from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, including six paintings by Brueghel the elder, four by Velasquez, three each by Rubens and Tintoretto and Giorgione's *Three Philosophers*. The National Gallery in Budapest was to provide 50 paintings, with works by Vermeer, Rembrandt, Titian, Velasquez, Goya and El Greco. Most of the list was drawn from German and Austrian collections. Although it seemed likely that Germany would be divided between the Allies, the list included works from all German museums because the compilers naively believed that the Americans and British would probably let them have the artworks in their own zones of occupation.

Museums that Grabar had visited on his Grand Tour in 1895 featured strongly. The Old Pinakothek in Munich was to provide 125 paintings including Albrecht Altdorfer's *Danube Landscape*, Adam Elseheimer's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, Hans Holbein the Younger's *Portrait of Sir Bryan Tuke* and the Columba Altarpiece by Rogier van der Weyden. three Madonnas by Raphael, and works by Titian, Tintoretto, Velasquez and Goya were also on the list.

Most of Dresden's masterpieces were selected, with emphasis on Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*, the most famous painting in the world at that time. The desired paintings followed Russian taste, with French painting including Courbet's *Stonecutters* and Puvis de Chavannes *The Fisherman's Family*. The list ignored Caspar David Friedrich of which there were plenty in Dresden. In Berlin the list singled out the Kaiser Friedrich Museum (now Berlin-Dahlem) with 179 paintings, including Rembrandt's *Man with a Golden Helmet*, Raphael's *Colonna Madonna*, Giotto's *Entombment of Mary*, Bosch's *St John at Patmos*, Petrus Christus's *Portrait of a Young Girl*, and van Eyck's *The Virgin in a Church* and works by Titian, Rubens and Van Dyck.



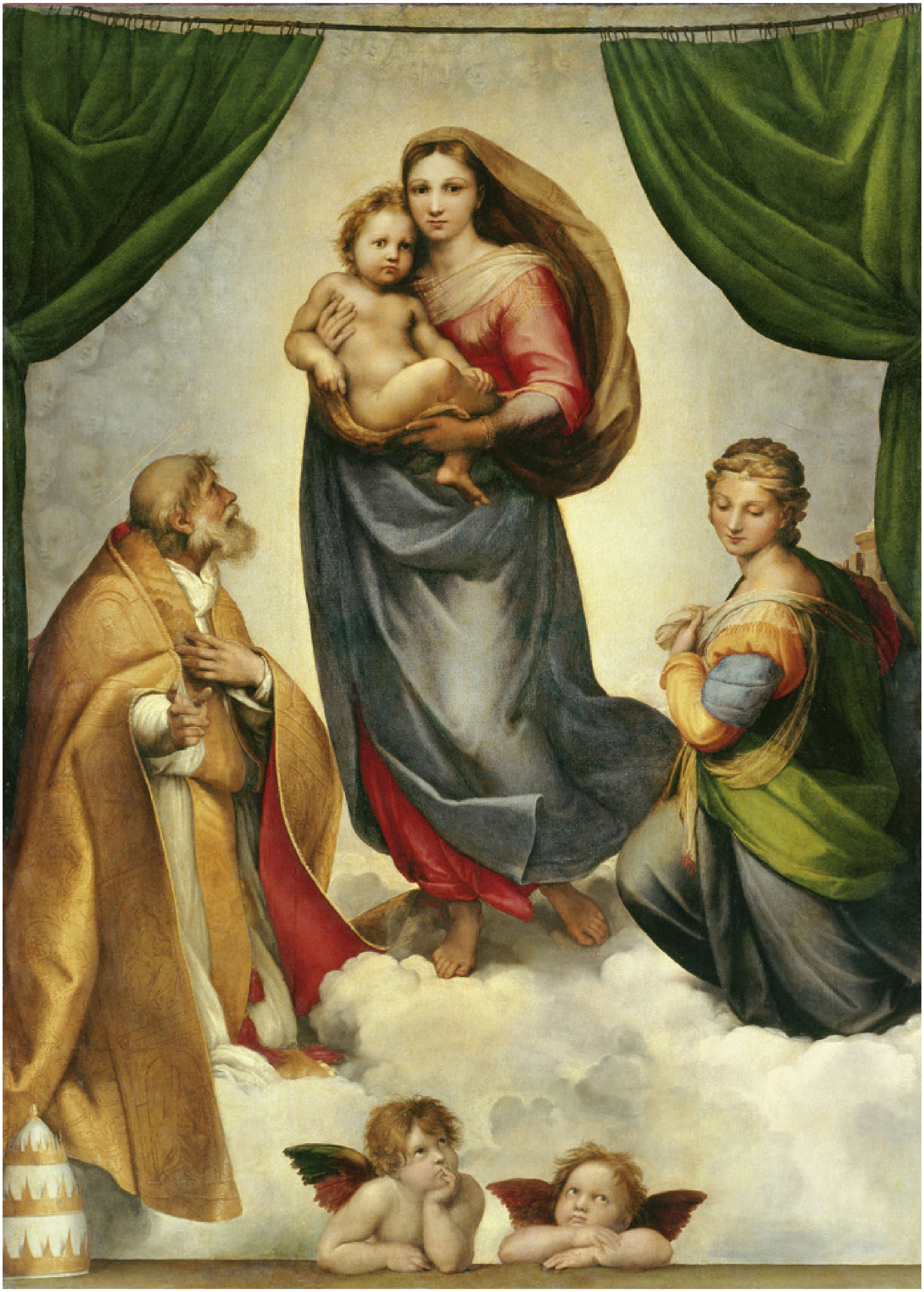
The Three Philosophers **by Giorgione (Giorgio da Castelfranco), (1477/78-1510).**

From the Kupferstichkabinett they chose 88 illustrations for the *Divine Comedy* by Botticelli and from Leipzig 25 paintings and 3 sculptures, including Frans Hals's *The Mulatto* and Rembrandt's *Self Portrait*. Paintings were also to come from Hamburg, Wurzburg, Potsdam, Oldenburg, Karlsruhe, Kassel, Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Braunschweig and Augsburg. Grabar submitted his list on 26th February 1945, as the trophy brigades were already receiving their military uniforms and responsibilities. They used the prices achieved in the sale of treasures from Soviet museums to the then US Treasury secretary Andrew Mellon in the 1930s, as a benchmark for their valuations.

There were 1745 masterpieces with a valuation at US$70.6 million. The *Sistine Madonna* was valued at US$2 million, but the most valuable item was the Pergamon Altar at US$7.5 million and the least valuable the US$200 attached to a knife in the Egyptian collection in Berlin. Both would soon find themselves in the USSR.

As suspected, no artworks were secured from Italy. The Naples paintings were hidden at the Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino before the Germans found them and stashed them in the salt mines at Alt Aussee in Austria. Monte Cassino was the first Benedictine monastery, founded by Benedict of Nursia in 529. The German looting of the Neapolitan treasures is a rare case of their removal leading to their survival because the US Air Force bombed the monastery on the 15th February 1944, believing it to be a German stronghold. The treasures of the Uffizi Museum in Florence were hidden by the Nazis in the South Tyrol and at Salzburg. Both groups were found and recovered by the Americans.

The first treasures from Germany arrived by aeroplane at Vnukovo Airport in Moscow on 30th June 1945, and contained Schliemann’s Trojan Gold from Berlin. On 10th August, the paintings from Dresden arrived, including Raphael’s Sistine Madonna. On 29th October the Pergamon Altar reached Leningrad. Courbet’s Stonecutters disappeared and may have been destroyed in the Anglo-American bombardment of Dresden in February 1945, and Signorelli’s Pan was incinerated in a fire in the Friedrichshain anti-aircraft tower in Berlin. The contents of the museums in Stuttgart, Cologne, Frankfurt and Munich fell within the American and British occupied zones and were denied to the Soviets.



***The Sistine Madonna* (1513) by Raphael (1483-1520).**

The Red Army was advancing. Fierce artillery barrage duels took place. Any artworks not stored underground were at risk from artillery. Very few front-line troops managed to get through the war without shrapnel wounds. The main hazard for artworks was from private looting by the Russian army.

Lieutenant Colonel Andrei Belokopitov was the first chief of the trophy brigade active in Merserlitz and Berlin. He had been head of the Moscow Art Theatre, which meant he knew many of the Russian high command. He sent back a report that soldiers were:

> collecting watches, typewriters, bicycles, carpets, pianos, which of course is a necessary undertaking, but being so occupied, they leave without control or security the museums, the big country estates, the theatres, where important museum valuables are destroyed or stolen, and most of the buildings as a result of this neglect are burnt out. I think the military commanders must give a special order to the front units that in case of occupation by the army of the big country estates and places, they must be taken under protection... Otherwise, important museum valuables will be left for destruction and pillage.[9]

Trophy brigade commanders also had to compete for resources with units responsible for the systematic removal of all German infrastructure. German industrial installations were stripped and everything removed. Whole factories and breweries from Brandenburg, Saxony and Thuringia were dismantled and taken to the Urals and Siberia to be reassembled.

All the factories in the Russian sector were taken, together with men's suits, coats, hats and women's dresses. Special military units with 60,000 German prisoners were given the use of 90,000 railcars. As 'material valuables' dwindled, the Soviets started removing Germany's artworks.

Belokopitov's trophy brigade discovered the artworks of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Posen hidden underground with the holdings of the museums of Riga and Tallinn. Crates had been smashed open. Coins, jewels, smashed glass and porcelain, church chalices, tabernacles, goblets, Greek and oriental vases were on the floor. The wood from the crates was being used as fuel and soldiers were cooking and storing water in fine porcelain vessels. Embroidered oriental textiles and tapestries were being used for bedding.

The soldiers had been tasked by the Red Army command to remove items for the generals' own private collections. The trophy brigade expelled the looters and resealed the crates for their removal. The area would soon be handed over to the Polish military administration so they had to work fast, packing and sending everything. The Department of Special Transportation of the Front gave them 22 railway cars and the 20th Trophy Battalion sent 120 soldiers and trucks. Another convoy of trucks arrived with artworks removed from the nearby Pansin Castle at Stargard and, when it arrived in Moscow, Museum officials had no idea which destination the artworks had come from.

The soldiers were mainly after typewriters, cameras, radios and furs or nylons for their girlfriends whereas the officers wanted art and treasures. The commander of the Russian army was General Zhukov, who had defeated the Japanese army in 1939 at Kalkin-Gol in Manchuria. He defended Leningrad and Moscow before pushing the Germans back to Berlin. A brilliant and cunning general, he was one of the few men to stand up to Stalin.

When Moscow was on the verge of collapse in 1941 Stalin turned to Zhukov and called him in Leningrad:

> ‘I’ve only got one request. Can you get on a plane and come to Moscow?’
>
> ‘I request to fly at dawn.’
>
> ‘We await you in Moscow.’
>
> ‘I’ll be there.’
>
> ‘All the best.’[10]

Stalin’s Order No. 246 of July 1941 stipulated that the entire families of men who were captured should be killed. Order No. 270 reads:

> I order that anyone who removes his insignia... and surrenders should be regarded as a malicious deserter whose family is to be arrested as a family and a breaker of the oath and a betrayer of the motherland. Such deserters are to be shot on the spot. Those falling into encirclement are to fight to the last ... those who prefer to surrender are to be destroyed by any available means while their families are to be deprived of all assistance.[11]

Red army Cavalry guarding ruins of Peterhof Palace after Germans evacuated it (1944).

Soviet deserting ceased to be a major problem after this order.

Zhukov started visiting the enormous caches of art being found and secretly built an impressive private collection, which he smuggled back into Russia. After the war Stalin became threatened by Zhukov's popularity as the man responsible for defeating the Nazis. Although Stalin tolerated the private collections of his colleagues and the senior military figures, he used the issue to destroy them when it suited him.

At a dramatic meeting of the Military Council in 1946 Stalin accused Zhukov of taking the credit for the Red Army victories, fired him and sent him into exile in Odessa as the commander of the minor Odessa military district. Victor Abakumov, the head of the sinister SMERSH (literally 'Death to Spies' or the secret service), and Lavrenty Beria, chief of State Security, accused Zhukov of looting and informed Stalin on 23rd August 1946 that customs officers had intercepted seven railcars of furniture sent from Germany by Zhukov.

On 8th January 1948, Stalin ordered a raid on Zhukov's *dacha* in the village of Rublevo near Moscow. The haul included 20 fine hunting rifles, crates of silverware, crystal, porcelain, hundreds of furs from animals ranging from monkey to mink, 4500 yards of expensive cloth, 8 accordions, 55 paintings and 44 carpets and tapestries from the Potsdam palaces. Viktor Abakumov reported to Stalin:

> Aside from all this, in all the rooms of the dacha there were many bronze and porcelain vases and statuettes and various knickknacks of foreign origin, on windowsills, shelves, tables, and whatnots... Zhukov's dacha is like an antique shop or a museum, decorated with various valuable paintings, and there are so many of them that four paintings are hung in the kitchen. It is shocking to say, but in Zhukov's bedroom a huge painting depicting two naked women is hanging over his bed! Among the paintings there are really valuable canvasses that should not be in a private apartment but should be given to state foundations and placed in a museum. All domestic items, beginning with furniture, carpets, dishes, and decorations and ending with window curtains, are of foreign origin, mainly German. There is nothing of Soviet origin in the dacha. We didn't even find one soviet book. But on the bookshelves there are many expensively bound books... in the German language only... When you enter this house it is hard to imagine that you are not in Germany but close to Moscow.[12]

General Zhukov (1896-1974).

Stalin ordered that Zhukov's collection of over 2000 items should be confiscated and it was handed over to Yakov Chadayev, the head of the Department of Council of Ministers. Zhukov was sent from Odessa to the even more remote Urals.

Abakumov had a sizable looted art collection himself. Abakumov and General Ivan Serov now battled to succeed Zhukov and both used the other's trophy collection to discredit the other.

In 1948 the secret police, on Abakumov's instruction, arrested General Sidnev, Serov's assistant, who admitted under torture that he had stolen 5 Flemish tapestries from the cellar of the State Mint in Berlin and confiscated: - 15 gold watches, 42 gold pendants, 3 gold and diamond bracelets, 15 gold rings, assorted women's jewellery and 600 silver spoons from German banks and then used Serov's private plane to send back furs, furniture, clothes, pianos and film projection equipment.

Serov responded to Stalin, ‘It seems that Abakumov has already forgotten that when soldiers and officers of the Soviet army were still dying in the Crimea liberating Sevastopol, his adjutant, Kusnetsov, flew to the headquarters of SMERSH counterintelligence and loaded the whole plane with trophy property. The commanders of the air force refused to fuel Abakumov’s plane for the flight back because they didn’t have enough fuel for the planes that were in battle with the Germans.’[13] Serov told Stalin that Abakumov always sent a plane for ‘transportation of arrested persons.’ The plane would be met by MGB (the predecessor of the KGB) officers who kept the customs officers away. Sometimes SMERSH officers wrote Abakumov’s name in big letters on the side of railway boxcars to deter customs agents and potential thieves.

Abakumov was arrested and executed. High-ranking Soviet elite, who all had looted collections, panicked. Some hid their collections but others have filtered down by descent and are still in Russia today. Many more sold their loot in Moscow, giving art dealers a post-war boom.

There was soon a mass of looted art in Moscow antique shops and in the 1950s and 1960s many fine private collections were assembled. Some are still intact and many pictures have the German museum inventory numbers on their reverse. The Russian museums continued to buy looted material from private collectors. The Pushkin Museum still allows anyone to show art to the curators on Thursday mornings and looted art continues to be brought in.

The trophy brigades were still sending large quantities of artworks, archives and books to the USSR. In Berlin, from 1940 onwards, the treasures of the museums had been hidden in the Reichsbank, the Prussian State bank, the Mint and in the newly constructed anti-aircraft *Flakturm* (towers) at the Zoo and the Friedrichshain. After heavy bombing in 1944 the Germans treasures were being sent to the salt mine in Grasleben near Helmstedt on the border between the Soviet and British zones and Schonebeck salt mine near Magdeburg. The gold stock of the Reichsbank was sent to the mines at Merkers. Much was left behind in the Flakturm and in bank vaults.

Old German people and wounded soldiers had to move the heavy artworks around at night or under fire during the day. Allied planes strafed the columns with no idea of their cargoes. At the mines the objects had to be carefully moved, sometimes as deep as 2000 feet, in the huge eerie salt caverns. With trucks, petrol and able-bodied men in short supply, chaos reigned. Space was limited for libraries, state archives, university material, bank records and gold bullion. At least 2500 packing cases alone were moved to Grasleben and after the war the US Military estimated that over 15,000 works of art shared this trip in their zone of occupation.

Curators watched their life's work descend into destruction. On the night of 10th March 1945, a single British bomb hit the State Mint and destroyed: - a large portion of the Berlin East Asian holdings and the collection of the Ethnographic Museum, most of the oriental prints collection of the Art Library, most of the porcelain from the Berlin porcelain factory and the museum of decorative arts, musical instruments and 12 important Islamic carpets.

The MFAA officer Richard Hayward described in his memoirs that in February 1945:

> In broad daylight, American bombers, trying to hit Gestapo Headquarters and saturating the governmental section of the city, scored more than twenty five direct hits on the buildings of the 'Museum Island', leaving the entire area a shambles of crumbling rubble, with the great monuments from Mshatta and Miletus peering like ghosts over ruins more sudden than those they had seen before in their two or three thousand year history[14]

Photographs show a city of rubble. Museum officials waited in their smashed museums. Between 1942 and 1945, 13 department heads died of natural causes, five were killed in action, several disappeared and several committed suicide. They continued packing their valuables and sending them to the mines, but when the city was surrounded by the Red Army, and the relentless air bombing ceased, they swung between terror and senseless resignation.

Red Army soldiers look through abandoned loot left by the German soldiers as they fled east Prussia.

The Russian perspective from popular writer Vsevelod Vishnevsky was different:

> We burst through the borders of Great Berlin at daybreak. It was a delightful dawn. The city, fourth largest in the world, lay before us ... The ill-omened, resentful city, where there were about three million Germans ... And the first discharges of the guns rumbled in the direction of Berlin ... For you, our Russian land, for all our trampled fields, for peasants' huts, for all our orphans, for all our widows, for the pain that burdened us all during four years of war! Oh, how furiously

> we shot and how constantly! Berlin, we will spare no one ... And the battle began inside the city... The roar of the city was incessant. Glass splinters and dust flew in all directions, an awful dust clouded this huge battle.[15]

Fierce battles raged around the Leitturm (where art objects were hidden), which became a target for Soviet artillery. Soviet infantry always threw in grenades before entering a building. The New Mint received several grenades before soldiers discovered it was full of Egyptian, Greek and Roman sculptures and pottery. Dozens of crates of vases, terracottas, glass vessels and pieces of the Pergamon Altar were smashed by the shrapnel.

After the city had fallen to the Red Army, André Belokopitov, head of the Berlin trophy brigade, tried to gain access to the treasures housed in the Zoo Flakturm but was denied by a SMERSH unit which had secured the building and was looking for high-ranking Nazis amongst the wounded in there. Gunfire and shelling were replaced by suicide, rape and robbery.

Belokopitov delayed visiting the Leitturm at Friedrichshain until he had written his initial report to Moscow, 'Summarizing the results of the inspection, we can say that we have several thousand pictures ... of German, French, and Italian masters and a large quantity of valuable copies of the works of the world's famous artists, several hundred marine statues ... a very large quantity of old palace furniture and objets d'art. There are several thousand miniatures ... about 50,000 rare editions of books ... The value ... is about 150,000,000 gold roubles'.[16] By the time he returned to the Leitturm, a fire had incinerated much of the art.

The fire started on 2nd May 1945 and when Belokopitov returned to the tower between the 7th and 14th May he saw that some items had survived the fire and he began organising their removal. He found the Roman *Caffarelli Sarcophagus* and could recognise the skull of an ox, the symbol of sacrifice and death. As he opened a heavy metal door, the marble statues began to fall apart and vapourised in front of him. When marble is exposed to extreme heat in the absence of oxygen, it is transformed into lime so when he opened the door and let oxygen in, the exchange of gases caused the statues to disintegrate. Belokopitov was the last human to see those sculptures intact.

Hitler's personal belongings were sent to a storage facility and his remains taken by plane to Moscow. The Führer's skull was kept secretly in a paper bag in the Russian State Archive in Moscow until 1992. Belokopitov sent Hitler's private collection of paintings to Moscow. The Zoo Flakturm fell into the Allied section of Berlin, so Belokopitov had to secure the artworks before they reached the British. The SMERSH agents still refused Belokopitov access to the tower and other looting units.

Belokopitov grew desperate and went directly to Zhukov, whom he knew from the theatre. Zhukov ordered SMERSH to hand over the building to Belokopitov and sent a sapper unit to help with the removal of an immensely heavy section of the Pergamon Altar, which was stored there.

Richard Howard commentated:

> Their most spectacular job in Berlin was the Pergamon Altar ... forty soldier workmen joyfully attacked the sculptures with pickaxe and crowbar. The friezes were ripped anew from their wall. Loaded into railway they were never seen again. About a hundred other first class Greek sculptures and architectural pieces, from Olympia, from Samos, from Priene and Miletos, from Didyma, and Baalbeck, brought by the devoted labour of archaeologists to Berlin went with them... seven thousand vases, eighteen hundred statues, nine thousand antique gems, sixty five hundred terra cottas and Tanagra figurines, and thousands of lesser objects were removed from the Department of Greek Antiquities alone.[17]

The Russians achieved in 2 days what the Germans had taken 4 weeks to accomplish.

Belokopitov supervised the removal of the contents of the Ethnographic Museum, the Art Library and the Museum for Pre- and Early History, private collections such as the Siemens collection and items the Germans had removed from Poland. The trophy brigade recovered 10,000 objects in various states of damage. Many objects were recovered from the New Mint damaged by grenades.

After 6 months an exhausted Belokopitov was posted back to Moscow. His replacement, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Voloshin carried on. Voloshin preferred to remove everything, not just important items, and stated, ‘We were guided by one feeling - not to leave the valuables to the Germans but, as fast as we could and by every possible way, to export them to the USSR and save them from theft. The decision was dictated by a difficult situation that required from us not to panic and delay but reasonable risk, operational bravery, quick decisions, and initiative.’[18]

Voloshin cleared out the New Mint before starting on Berlin’s Museum Island. The cellars there revealed Goya’s Maypole and works by Andrea

Mantegna, Lorenzo di Credi, Ghirlandaio and Ercole Roberti. Artworks included Byzantine and early Christian objects, Coptic textiles and crosses, icons and Italian furniture. Paintings from private collections, including El Greco's John the Baptist from the Koehler collection, formed part of 122 crates, 3 strongboxes of coins and 69 boxes of books removed.

Soviet officials unload trucks full of art works taken from Germany. The woman in the lower left-hand side of the photograph is Irina Antonova later to become Director of the Pushkin Museum.

The contents of the Dresden Gallery in a mine in Gross Cotta near Pirna was the Soviet trophy brigades' most important find. The gallery had been assembled by the Electors of Saxony August II and August III in the first half of the eighteenth century, with masterpieces by Raphael, Giorgione, Correggio, Titian, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Dürer, Cranach, Holbein, van Eyck, Rubens and Van Dyck. The discovery was reported to Stalin who said it was of 'state importance' and must go to Moscow immediately.

Stalin ruled his empire with minute attention to detail and took a close interest in the huge quantity of artworks that was pouring into the USSR from defeated Germany. His moods oscillated from avuncular and genial to icy and ruthless. Women often mistook his genial mood for familiarity and made the mistake of asking him for a favour. Marshal Gregory Kulik, the Deputy Defence Commissar, was holding his birthday party in November

1939 when Stalin appeared with a case of wine. The evening developed into a sing-song and the wine flowed. The court singer Kozlovsky sang Stalin's favourite songs including the Duke's aria from Rigoletto. Kulik's wife, Kira Simonovich, made the fatal error of cornering Stalin by the piano and asking him to release her brother, a former tsarist officer, from the labour camps. The following day Stalin ordered Kira's kidnapping and she was executed in the Lubianka shortly afterwards. Stalin was suspicious of his sub-leader's wives as he was worried about pillow talk and many met a similar fate. Husbands then had to put on a show of looking for their wives who had disappeared, whilst knowing what had happened.

Because Stalin particularly wanted Raphael's famous Sistine Madonna, several members of the trophy brigade wrote that they had found it. The Dresden pictures were moved to Weesenstein castle. At Weesenstein were the prints and drawings and some of the paintings from Dresden, part of the graphic collection of the Führermuseum in Linz, the nineteenth-century drawings of Prince Georg of Saxony, 40 etchings of Rembrandt from the Guttmann collection in Vienna and the Palmier collection.

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Trucks full of art works from Germany wait to be unloaded.

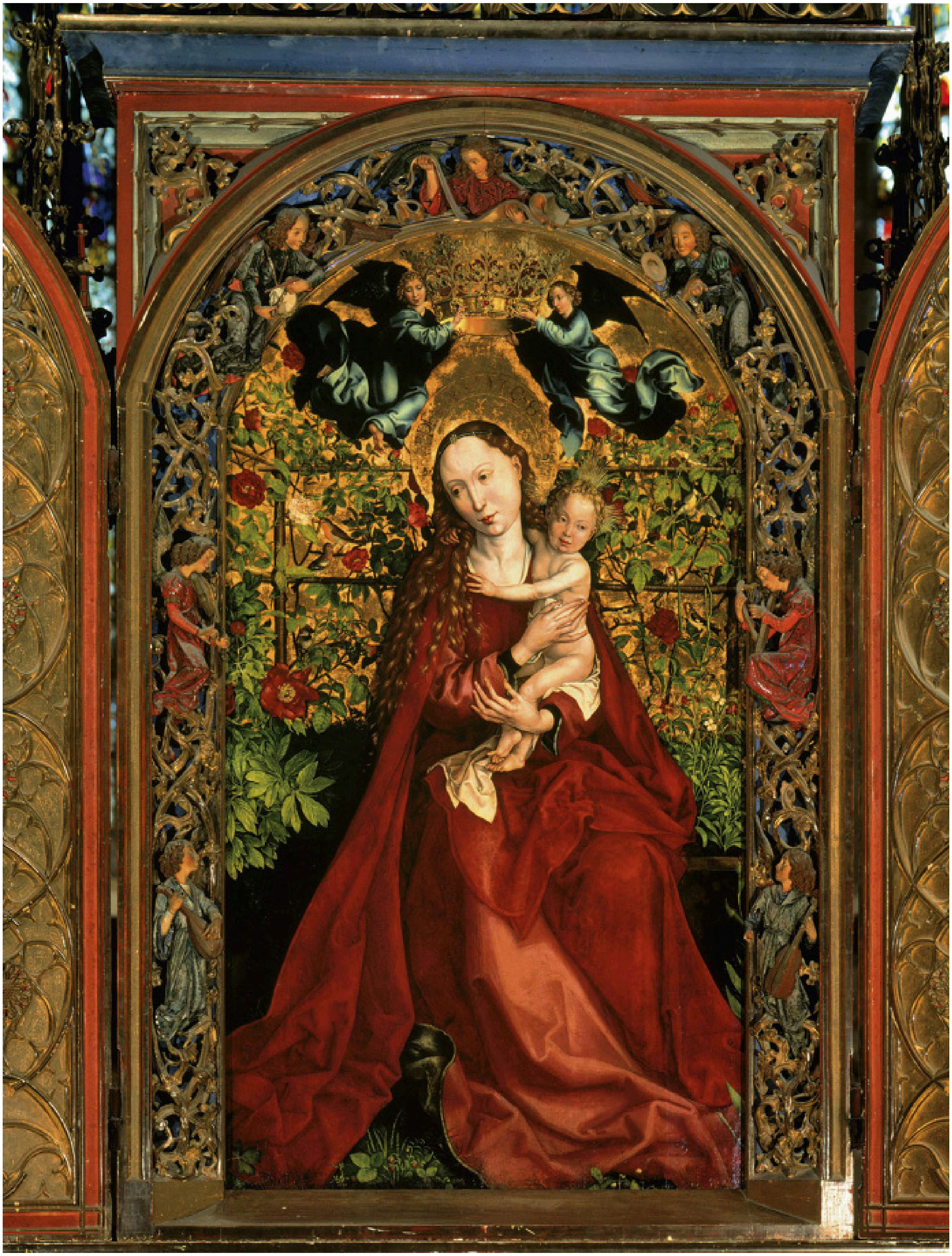
The Russians captured Herman Voss, Director of the Dresden Gallery and Hitler's last head of the Führermuseum project. The trophy brigade commander, Mikhail Volodin wrote that Voss, 'had been in Leningrad in the Hermitage, but this "important specialist" in the Italian Renaissance couldn't name any Russian artists. 'A typical Aryan! He can't see beyond his nose. All right, it's his problem, not ours, but such an absence of curiosity is shocking.'[19] A final deposit of the Dresden collections was discovered near Pockau-Lengefeld and held Rembrandt's Self Portrait Titian's *Tribute Money* and a Botticelli *Madonna*.

On 12th July 1945, Stalin sent a telegram to Marshal Konev, the Soviet Commander in the area, 'Give necessary help in transportation to Moscow of the cargo prepared by the Brigade of Colonel Rototayev. Remember that the cargo is of state importance, provide the necessary security, and report the accomplishment, Stalin.'[20] From 400 paintings discovered at Gross Cotta, 500 at Weesenstein and 350 at Pockau-Lengefeld, 600 were selected and sent to Moscow by a special train that left on 30th July.

The Pushkin Museum in Moscow and the Hermitage in Leningrad received paintings in huge numbers. In 1945 the Pushkin Museum received more than 500 crates containing paintings, miniatures, sculptures and furniture as well as 52 crates containing 4137 gold and 84,749 silver coins. The Council of Peoples Commissars of Ukraine, led by the powerful Nikita Krushchev had its own trophy brigade, who secured some fine works by Cranach, Dürer, Veronese and Rubens and took them to Kiev.

When the Americans left the illegally occupied area around Thuringia over 100 miles into the Soviet zone, the Soviet trophy brigade moved in, hoping the Americans had overlooked some mines. The Americans had been thorough in removing the gold stock of the Reichsbank and the art treasures of the Berlin museums hidden at the Kaiseroda mine near Merkers, but they had overlooked the 98 Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings of the industrialist Otto Krebs. Krebs had hidden his collection in a special room in the cellar of his country estate, Gut Holzdorf, near Weimar. Before he died of cancer in 1941 he left all his property to a cancer research foundation.

The Americans had occupied Krebs's house through June 1945, but they never found the cache hidden in the cellar behind a massive iron door. The house had then been robbed several times by local villagers who also failed to find the artworks. In the spring of 1946 the house was occupied by General Vasily Chukov, the local Red Army commander. At the end of 1948, a German art historian told the story of the Krebs collection to Major General Zorin, head of reparations, supplies and restitution of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany. Zorin despatched two people to Guz Holzdorf and General Chukov was surprised to find he had been living above such a collection. A safe cutter cut through the door and they found five Cézannes, four Gauguins, four Van Goghs, ten Renoirs and two Manets, as well as works by Picasso, Matisse and ten Degas bronzes, all in perfect condition. These artworks were shipped to the Hermitage where they remained secret until exhibited in 1995.

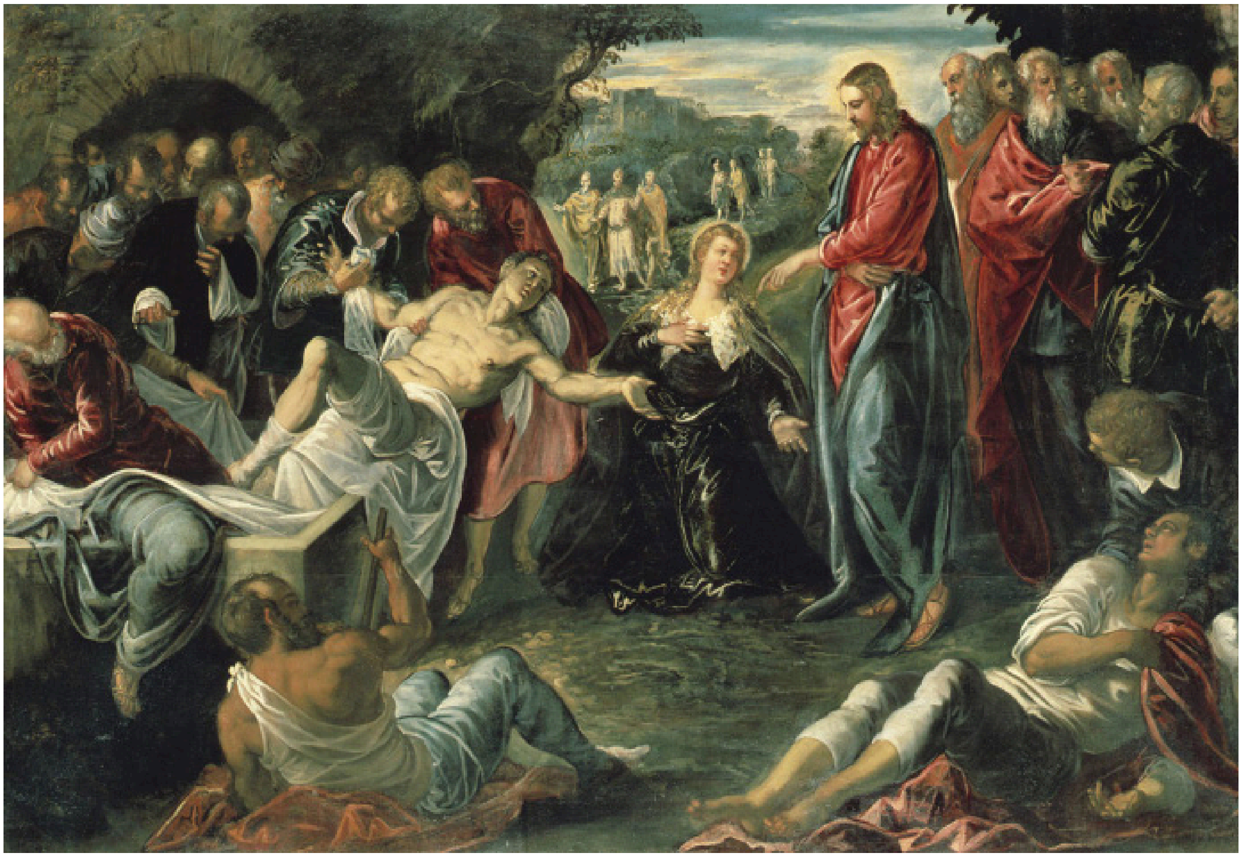


The Virgin Mary in the Rose Arbour (1473) by Martin Schongauer (1450-1491)

The trophy brigade Commander Alexander Voloshin, who had been successful in Berlin, also found the paintings of the Leipzig museums. On 7th July 1945, he compiled a list of 14 artwork deposits in quarry tunnels, country estates, castles, bank vaults and bomb shelters. Other trophy brigade personnel urged restraint and they selected 106 paintings out of the 1200 pictures from the Leipzig Museum of Fine Arts, including Martin Schongauer's *Madonna amongst the Roses*, Frans Hals's *Mulatto*, Tintoretto's *Resurrection of Lazarus* and van Eyck's *Portrait of an Old Canon* and 15 sculptures including works by Maillol and Rodin.

The collection of the dukes of Coburg-Gotha at their castle of Reinhardsbrunn was removed and the libraries of Gotha and Leipzig and the other cities of Saxony and Thuringia were shared between the Lenin Library and the library of the Academy of Sciences. The Institute of Nuclear Research in Dubna received 3332 books from the Department of Experimental Physics at Halle University and 37,000 volumes went to the Academy of Science from the Meiningen State Library.

Twenty-five crates of arms and armour were sent from the Dresden Historical Museum to the Artillery Museum of the Red Army. At Wartburg castle, near Eisenach, Lieutenant Colonel Novoselov, the Eisenach commander, removed 1500 banners, swords, sabres, helmets and suits of armour from the Rüstkammer, the armoury of the counts of Thuringia, and these have not been seen since.



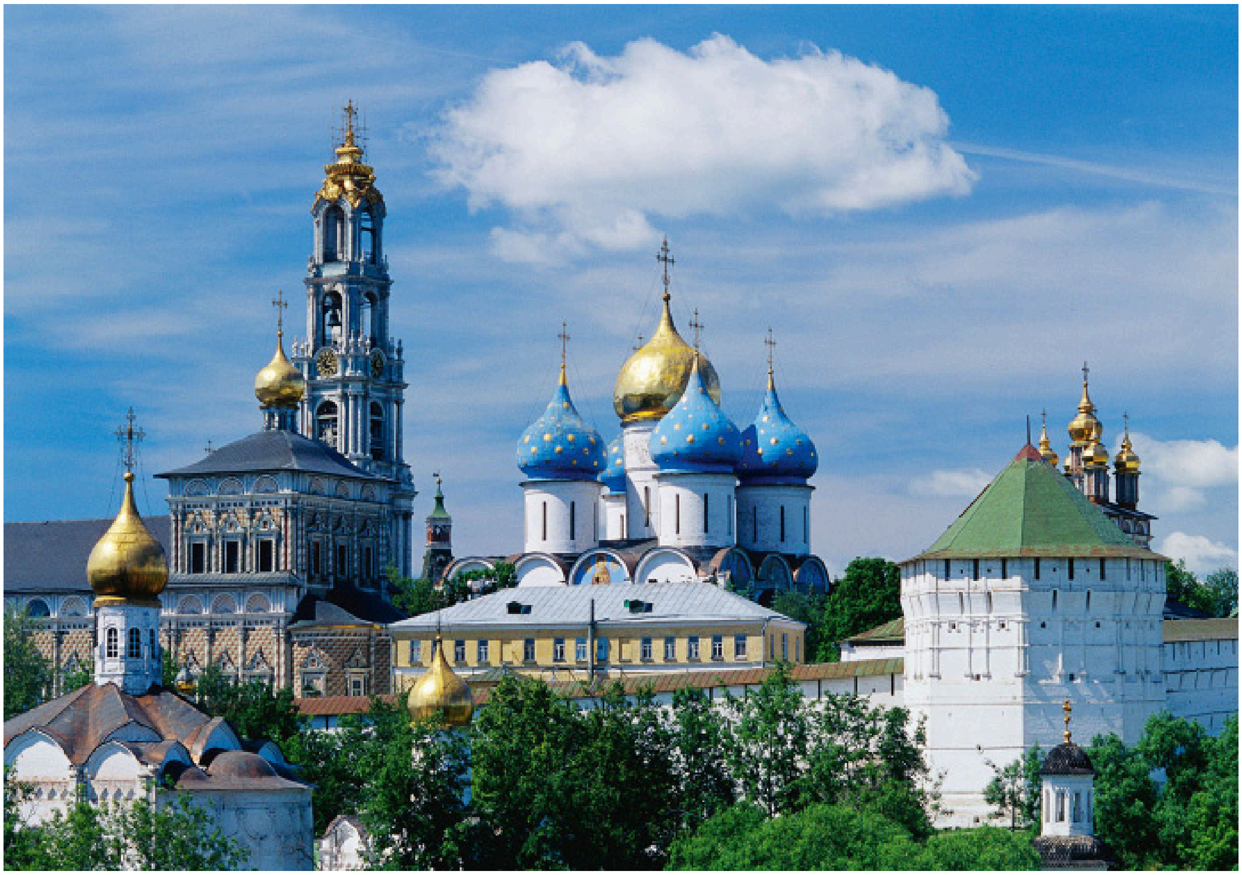
The Raising of Lazarus **(1550) by Tintoretto (1518-1594)**

Museum officials in Leningrad and Moscow struggled to keep up with the artworks arriving. Hidden amongst the artworks were a mass of smuggled radios, wristwatches, gold and diamonds. In with the Dresden treasures customs officials found some motor scooters. Items confiscated by customs include bicycles, accordions, lathes, overcoats, spools of thread, umbrellas, carpets, violins, mandolins and furs. Bombers loaded up their empty bomb hatches with looted goods, but one such run ended in disaster when a pilot was too drunk to fly. The replacement pilot wasn't aware and playfully opened the bomb hatch, bombing a small German town with typewriters, porcelains, furs, cameras and gilded frames.

By the end of 1945 the Pushkin Museum had received 2991 crates of objects and one portfolio of drawings. Often the crates arrived with no paperwork to say where they were from. The museum had been bomb damaged and storage conditions were unsatisfactory. Sergei Merkurov, Director of the museum later recalled, 'the museum was so packed with trophy objects that even finding a place to put them became extremely difficult, not to mention unpacking and registration... Everything that was humanly possible was done, and one must keep in mind the difficulties the museum had to overcome.'[21]

The State Historical Museum on Red Square received 2587 crates of objects and also had little room for the loot, as its own collection, packed up during the German advance, had only filled 1012 crates. The museum received rich collections of armour, weapons, costumes, silver objects, 82,000 silver and gold coins, graphic works, old furniture, medieval maps, Greek papyri, ceramics and objects from excavations. The Museum of the Peoples of the USSR received artworks as did the Ethnographic Museum.

In October 1945, 46 freight cars returned the contents of the Hermitage Museum to Leningrad. At the same time, 34 cars of trophies arrived and were unpacked with the permanent collection. In total, the Hermitage received the contents of four special trains including the Pergamon Altar reliefs, Degas' Place de la Concorde from the private Gerstenberg collection and Botticelli's illustrations for the Divine Comedy. Only high-ranking Soviet officials and a few curators were allowed to see the trophy art and it remained an official secret.



Trinity-St Sergius monastery in Zagorsk.

After the euphoric couple of years, 1948 ushered in the campaign against ‘cosmopolitanism’. Scientists, Jews, artists, western sympathisers and curators came under attack. The composers Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich and the poet Anna Akhmatova were lambasted in the press and harried by the police. The Tairov Theatre, literary magazines and the Museum of Western Art, which housed the Impressionist paintings that had formerly belonged to Morozov and Shchukin, were closed. The Socialist realist painter beloved of the Soviet elite and president of the Academy of Arts, Alexander Gerasimov, suggested that masterpieces by van Gogh, Picasso and Matisse should be burnt. Although his official production fell within the Soviet Realistic style, Gerasimov painted accomplished Impressionist paintings secretly in his spare time. Luckily, the denounced paintings went into the secret depositories of the Pushkin and the Hermitage and were later divided between the two museums.

The status of the Pushkin and Hermitage museums rapidly declined. In 1949 the Pushkin Museum was closed to display the gifts sent to celebrate Stalin’s 70th birthday on 21st December. More than 2000 people worked for 2 weeks to prepare the display of gifts, which opened to the public on 22nd December. The chiefs of all ‘fraternal parties’ around Europe attended and gifts ranged from paintings by the Communist artist Renato Guttoso, and coal and salt sculptures made by miners, to boxes of chocolates and bottles of wine. The exhibition stayed open until 1953, although Stalin never visited. One visitor said, ‘It is impossible to compare this to the Hermitage. This is better. What beauty! It is a genuine manifestation of human creativity!’[22]

During the exhibition, conditions in the Pushkin Museum became worse, with most of the curators being fired and secret policemen patrolling the galleries with dogs at night. The Hermitage suffered the same fate. Finally in 1953, after Stalin’s death, the new regime recognised the importance of the collections and the appalling condition of the artworks. The Ministry of State Control hired new curators and gave instructions for an inventory to be compiled of the National USSR collection and the trophies.

By the mid 1950s the issue of restitution began to worry the Soviet elite. On 3rd March 1955, Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov said in a note to the Central Committee, ‘There are two possible ways to resolve this problem,’ the Soviets could either publicly announce that the ‘cultural treasures of the Dresden gallery' belonged to the Soviet people or they could return them to the German people, 'as their heritage.' A decision was made to return the paintings to Dresden, 'for the purpose of further strengthening and developing friendly relations between Soviet and German people.'[23]

The Ministry of Culture revealed that the Pushkin Museum contained 738 paintings, 10 tapestries, and 7 miniatures and the Hermitage had 11 paintings from Dresden, but on the day of the announcement another 501 paintings and two pastels from Dresden were found in Kiev, stolen by the Kiev trophy brigade and unknown to Moscow. These items were rapidly incorporated into the deal.

The return of the treasures reignited the issue of who had actually found the treasures in Germany. Leonid Rabinovich, who had been a second lieutenant in the 164th Trophy Battalion of the Fifth Guard, retold his story in the national press and later published a scrappy thriller entitled Seven Days in 1957, featuring a Soviet James Bond figure outwitting Nazi saboteurs and surviving mined and booby-trapped caves. He helped re-create the myth that the treasures had been in danger from poor storage conditions and imminent destruction by the Nazis before being 'rescued' by the Red Army. However, Andrei Chegodayev, the first curator of the Dresden Gallery in the Pushkin Museum, later admitted that, 'Nobody talked about saving the Dresden gallery. It was taken as a Trophy. But soon after its return, the story about the saving of the collection was widely circulated... It was a blatant lie, but the officials found it useful and even the Germans were hypnotised by it. Shostakovich even wrote a cantata on the "saving" of the Dresden gallery.'[24]

On 2nd May the 'rescued' masterpieces were exhibited at the Pushkin Museum. The opening was a gala event attended by foreign dignitaries, with a parade of tanks on Red Square. Nikolai Mikhailov, Minister for Culture 1955-1960 and in charge of the return of looted works to Germany between 1958 and 1959, boasted that the artworks had been rescued twice, first from the damp caves by the Red Army and then by Soviet museum officials and restorers. After the exhibition closed, the paintings were sent back to Germany.

The Soviet museums were forced to carry out a proper inventory of trophy collections, and the scale of the looting that emerged surprised even those involved. The Pushkin's depositories contained over 500,000 looted objects (363,903 directly transported to Moscow by special train and 165,720 given to the museum by other organisations). Of the 1051 paintings, 94 came from private collections and 480 were of unknown provenance. The Hermitage depositories revealed 829,561 artworks, including 2724 paintings with 180 from private collections and 26,214 objects of unknown origin.

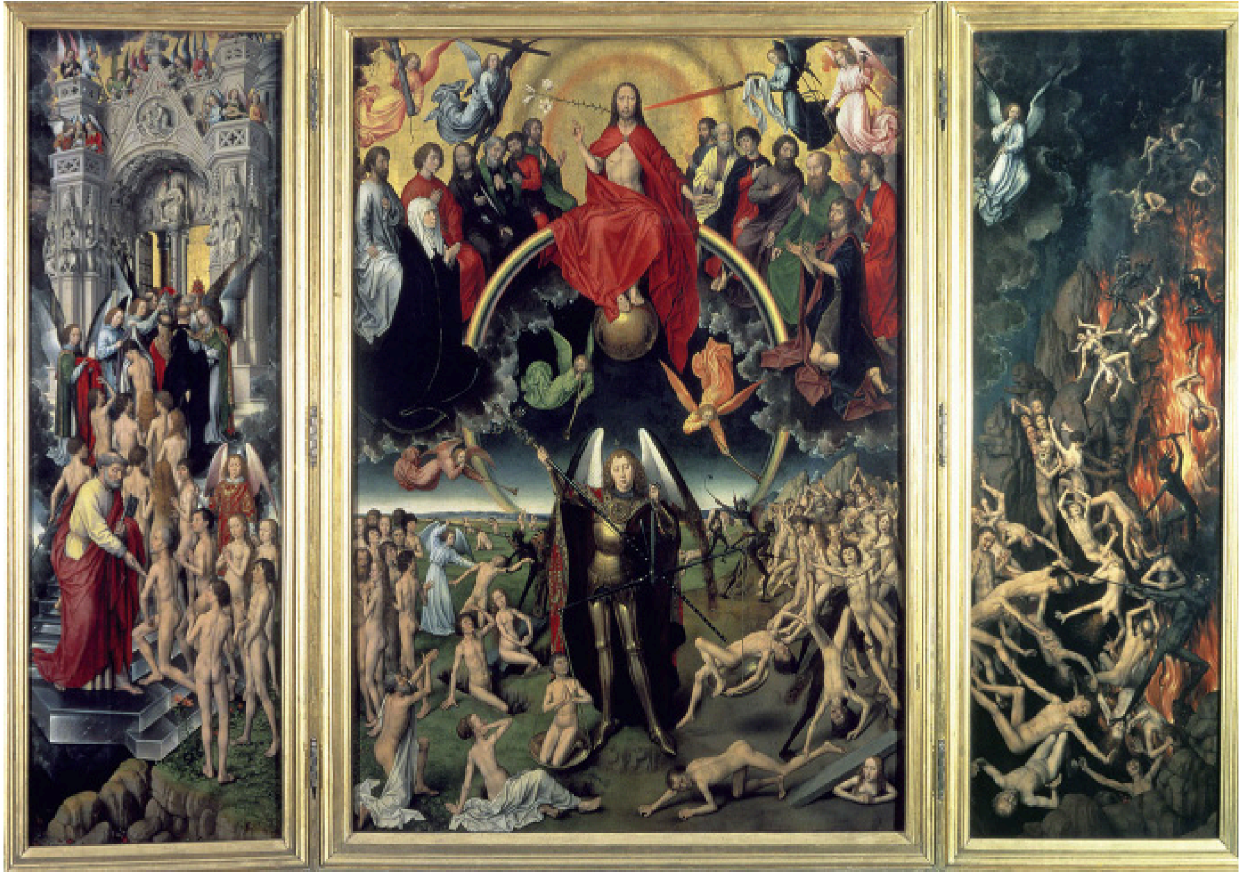
The state ministries and smaller museums were full of loot. The Ministry of Railway Transport contained the archive of the German railroads and the Ministry of Geology had several German geological collections. The Ministry of Defence admitted to marine paintings in the Central Naval Museum and arms and armour in the Museum of Artillery in Leningrad. The final tally collated by the Ministry of Culture came to 2,614,874 objects and 534 crates of archaeological materials. There were 108,338 objects from private collections, including 915 paintings, with over 50,000 objects of unknown provenance. Nobody dared ask what the KGB had.

When the Pushkin and Hermitage museums had filled up in 1945, items were sent to provincial museums and then to trophy deposits in monasteries and storage shelters around the USSR, the largest of which was at the Trinity-Saint Sergius monastery in Zagorsk. The monastery was founded in the fourteenth century by Sergei Radnonezhsky, Russia's most renowned saint and became Russia's foremost monastery, drawing pilgrims ranging from tsars to beggars who came to pray before the saints' relics, drink the miraculous waters and kneel before Russia's most famous icon, Andrei Rublev's *Holy Trinity*.

In 1918 Lenin had thrown out the monks and turned the monastery into a museum. Krushchev later made it into an art depository. In addition to becoming a major trophy deposit, which from 1962 included a part of the secret holding of the Pushkin Museum, the Beer tower of the monastery was also used to house all the portraiture of Soviet leaders and party officials after they fell from favour, such as Laventy Beria, Krushchev, Brezhnev and Zhukov, alongside masterpieces by Cranach, Van Dyck, Guido Reni, Murillo, Dürer, Michelangelo and Poussin. There are also 1157 oriental prints, arms and armour, and 215 sculptures of the Renaissance including important pieces by Donatello, Verrocchio and Pisano.

Curators from the Pushkin and Hermitage museums could not afford the train ticket to travel to remote locations and much of the material remains in its WWII boxes still today, implying that the total of looted objects is considerably higher than the official figures.

A second return of around 400,000 objects was made to East Germany between 15th October 1958 and 1st January 1959, to the dismay of Soviet art historians, who fought to keep the treasures in Russia. The Germans paid for the packing and the shipping. This return included important works by Brueghel, Picasso, Maillol, Rodin, Munch, van Eyck and the *Pergamon Altar*. The Russian press was not as enthusiastic this time and the mood in Russia was turning against restitution. By the middle of January 1959, 1,569,176 trophy objects and 121 boxes of books and photographs from the secret depositories in Kiev, Moscow and Leningrad had been returned.



***The Last Judgement* (1473) by Hans Memling (active 1465-94)**

Polish artworks and Hans Memling's *Last Judgement*, looted earlier by the Nazis, were returned to Poland. Communist Romania also received art collections which had been sent to Russia for safekeeping during the war. Many were in bad condition, having been stored in mines by the Germans and then transported to Russia on unheated trains, so a frantic programme of restoration was undertaken on the items to be returned.

It was decided generally not to return books (already dispersed around the Russian libraries), anything from a private collection, anything with an unknown provenance, anything taken by the Nazis from their occupied territories and items that belonged to museums in West Germany. Only some of the books removed from public institutions in East Germany were returned.

The Soviets demanded return of items held in East Germany that had been looted by the Nazis. The response of the East Germans when the GDR Embassy in Moscow sent them a note on 19th October 1957, was, 'After a careful search organised by German State Institutions, it was learned that there are no cultural valuables from the USSR in the German Democratic Republic.'[25] It was always assumed that artworks still remained in Germany and the Soviets had used this to justify their own looting programme. The truth was that between 1945 and 1948 Major General Leonid Zorin, commander of the Department of Reparations, Supplies, and Restitution of the Soviet military administration in Germany received 534,120 artworks from Russia discovered by the Americans in their zone of occupation, including the contents of the museums at Novgorod, Pskov, Smolensk, Minsk and Kiev. The department's records were classified and after 10 years myth had supplanted reality. The items had been shipped back to Russia in 1947 and their whereabouts today is unknown.

The remaining official trophy art remained secret until the mid 1990s but thousands of privately looted art objects circulated on the Moscow art market, being bought by the museums and private collectors. Most of the good paintings in Russian private collections come from WWII looted plunder. Felix Vishnevsky, a curator at the Historical Museum, nicknamed the 'garbage man' because of ability to find art in garbage cans, amassed one of the best private collections after the war by buying looted artworks. Vishnevsky's collection included 25 prints and drawings from the Bremen Kunsthalle with works by Dürer and Rembrandt, and paintings by Luca Giordano, Schinkel, Klinger and the panels of Cranach's Torgau altarpiece from the Dresden gallery.

A fire at the Trinity-Saint Sergius monastery in 1986 drew attention to the artworks and Boris Yeltsin, the then head of the Communist party visited. The Pushkin restorers visit the monastery one day every three months and the Pushkin curators visit when they can. There are three permanent curators of the 'special archive' working there. Since the depository was created in 1963 little has changed. Some portraits of discredited leaders from Stalin to Brezhnev hang on museum walls, but most of the trophy artworks from Poland, Austria, France and Germany languish there and in countless other depositories and regional museums around Russia.

The Pushkin Museum retains more than 200,000 trophy objects. Graphics, including the Koenig's collection of drawings from Rotterdam, are in the mansion next to the museum that houses works on paper, and tens of thousands of books, their seals cut out, are in the library. Schliemann's Trojan gold was kept in a small room with an iron door behind a curtain before its existence was admitted in 1994 and selected European scholars allowed access. The Hermitage has the 78 Impressionist and Post Impressionists from Otto Krebs' collection including works by Van Gogh, Renoir, Matisse, Manet, Signac and Picasso. The Hermitage put some of these paintings on exhibition for the first time in 1995.

The Kiev Museum of Western and Oriental Art houses the graphics collection of the Berlin Academy of Arts and prints from the Dresden collection and paintings from German private collections by Oskar Kokoschka and Franz Marc. The sanatorium of the Academy of Sciences in the Moscow suburb of Uzkoe has over a dozen paintings from the museums of Charlottenburg and Potsdam.

Various individuals in Russia have tried unsuccessfully to bring restitution into the open since WWII. Victor Baldwin, a curator at the Shusev State Scientific Research Museum of Architecture in Moscow, was a captain in the 38th Field Engineers Brigade of the Red Army in 1945 when on 5th May he received an order to occupy Karznow castle near Kyritz. The owner of the castle, Count Königsberg, rowed onto the lake beside the castle with his mistress and attempted a double suicide. The Count drowned but his mistress was less enthusiastic and survived.

In the castle Baldwin found the collection of the Kunsthalle in Bremen consisting of 50 paintings, 1715 drawings and over 3000 prints. Baldwin's unit looted the collection and Baldwin himself removed 362 drawings and two small paintings, including works by Corot, Delacroix, Degas, Dürer, van Gogh, Goya, Manet, Rembrandt, Raphael, Rubens, Rodin, Toulouse Lautrec and Titian. Back in Russia, Baldwin enhanced his collection trading wristwatches, belts and minor trophies for further drawings. He sacrificed a pair of 'really good boots' for Dürer's priceless Salvator Mundi.

Baldwin hid his collection at his home after the war and then gave it to the museum where he worked, the Shusev State Scientific Research Museum. It was transferred to the Hermitage in 1991.

Baldwin tried to persuade Soviet authorities to return the drawings he had stolen back to Bremen by writing to successive Soviet leaders from

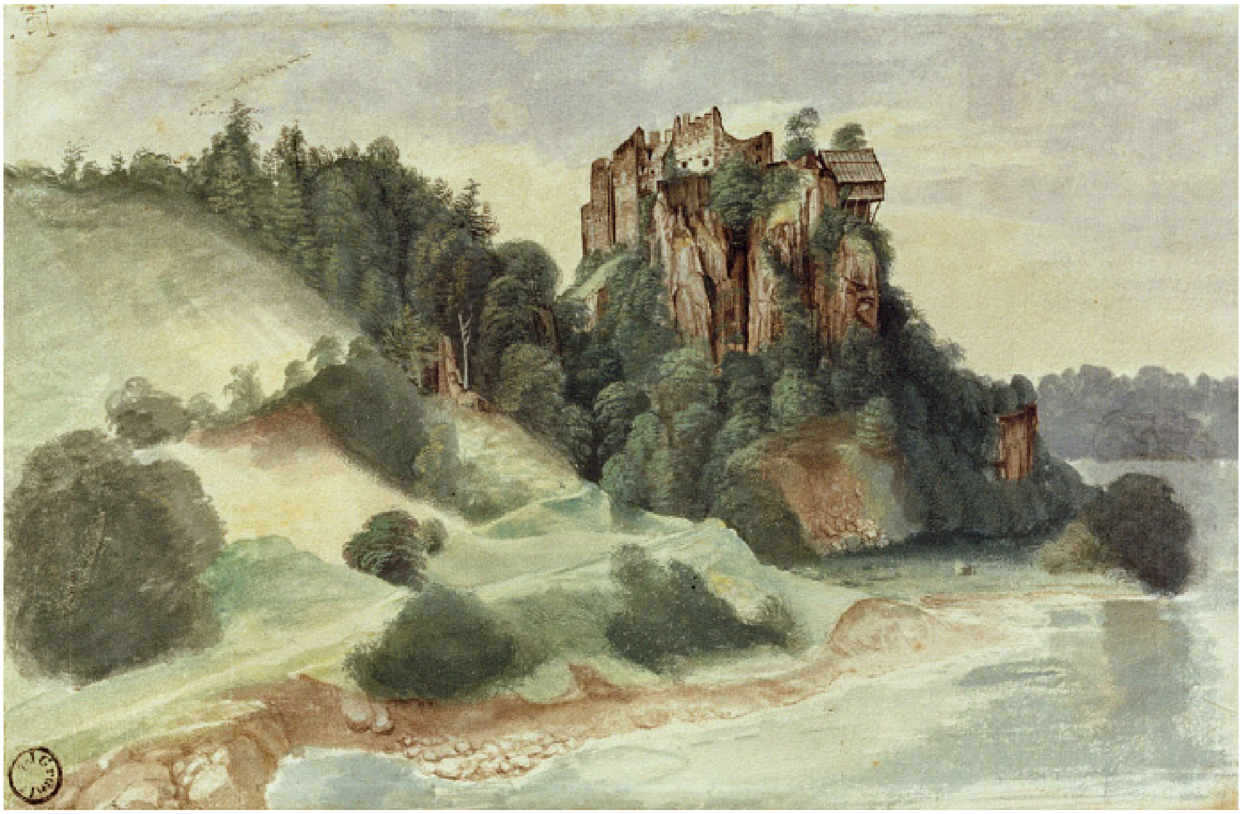
Brezhnev in 1973 to Raisa and Mikhail Gorbachov. In 1987 Baldwin went to Bremen and told them the drawings were in the Hermitage but in 1992, the Director of the Hermitage, Vasily Suzlov, exhibited 162 of the 362 drawings, dashing hopes of a restitution. Masterpieces such as van Gogh’s *Starry Night* of 1888 were seen for the first time in 50 years. The Culture Minister, Alexander Sokolov, said in 1995 that any talks of their return had been ‘premature’.

Konstantin Akinsha and Grigorii Kozlov, two leading activists, tracked down two further caches of the Bremen drawings after an interview with Baldwin. One cache of 34 drawings was handed in by a soldier to a museum in Tashkent and another cache containing 50 drawings surfaced in Siberia. Both these collections are now in the Pushkin Museum.

Akinsha and Kozlov received a tip from a friend in the Ministry of Culture that a crazy old man was trying to return some drawings to Bremen. In 1993 they found themselves travelling to the desolate outskirts of a provincial city. Finally they found the shabby building made of cheap material at the time of Krushchev. The old man lived with two other people in a one-bedroom apartment.

The old man was an art historian and explained that he was representing a friend who wanted to remain anonymous. The friend had been in Baldwin’s unit and ‘found’ a package near the castle that had been removed by one of the other soldiers. Now he wanted just to return them.

The old man reached under the sofa and slowly pulled out a dusty brown package. As he started showing the 45 drawings and 56 prints in the half-light Akinsha and Kozlov found themselves looking at works by Manet, Tintoretto, Rubens, Veronese, Jordaens and Hans Baldung Grien. ‘I like this Watteau very much,’ said the old man, handing Kozlov a small sheet of yellowing paper with a red chalk drawing of a girl holding a crayfish. ‘This one is probably the best,’ he added, before handing over an exquisite watercolour of a *View of a Rock Castle beside a River* by Dürer.[26]



View of a Rock Castle beside a River (1494-95) by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528)

A few months later Akinsha, Kozlov and the art historian handed the drawings over to the cultural attaché at the German Embassy in Moscow. The cultural attaché was visibly nervous. The Kunsthalle had published printed catalogues of the looted artworks in 1991 and they checked the works off against the list. They signed the paperwork and relaxed, relieved about finalising the transfer of tens of millions of dollars worth of drawings.

However, except for Dürer's *View of a Rock Castle beside a River*, and a few other pieces traded in 2000 with Germany for the return of two mosaic panels from the Amber Room, the drawings have remained at the German Embassy ever since, because the Russian government have made it quite clear the drawings are not to leave Russian soil. Bremen did manage to retrieve three drawings from New York that surfaced from another Russian soldier, but the majority of the collection remains in Russia.

In 1989 when the Berlin wall came down, the 'first state of German workers and peasants' ceased to exist, and the problems of restitution became the problem of a united Germany. The West German government conducted an audit in 1997 of missing artworks believed to be in Russia and came up with a valuation of US$67 billion. The issue has hung like a black cloud over European politics ever since WWII.

The Russians and Germans both advance legal opinions on their positions. The Germans cite the Hague Convention of 1907 which says 'works of art and science' and 'institutions dedicated to ... the arts and sciences' on occupied territory are protected against confiscation. Presumably this argument could also be used by the Russians against the Germans for their own confiscations on Russian soil. The Germans also mention the two German-Russian treaties, arguing that the confiscations were in breach of those treaties but it was the Germans who first violated the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939 by invading Russia with four million men in Operation Barbarossa. The Germans seem reluctant to push the issue, aware perhaps that they started the war and with residual guilt even after 50 years. When the Russians mention the 25 million dead and start talking of this art somehow filling the gap left by the loss of these people, they shift the argument from a weak legal position to a powerful emotional one, to which the Germans have no answer.

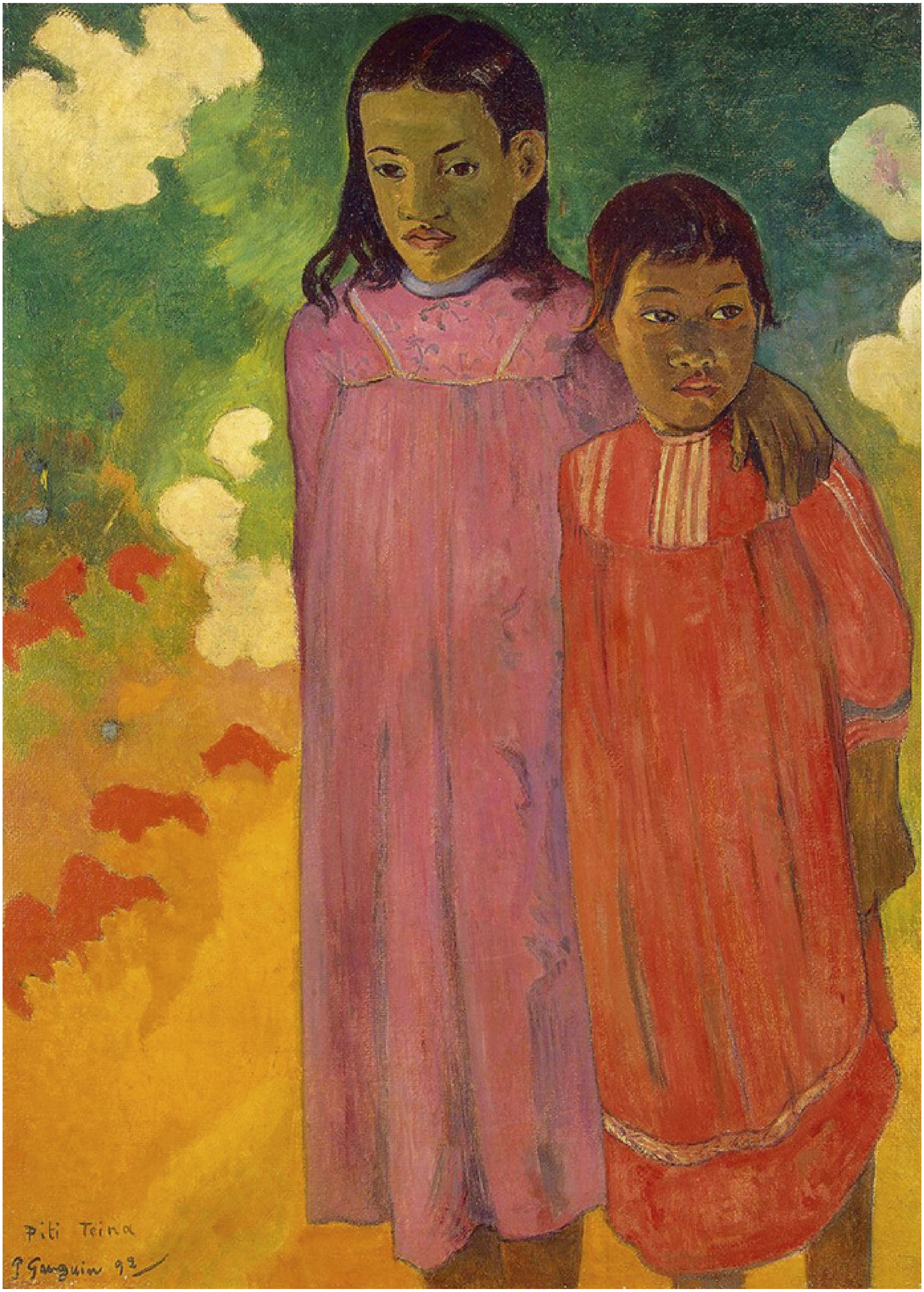
The Russian position is based on a legal opinion from the Institute of State and Law of the Academy of Sciences which maintains that the Russian looting of Germany was legal because everybody was doing it. The Russian legal experts maintain that the Allied Control Council, the body that ruled the defeated Germany recognised the 'compensation principle of restitution' because the Yalta Conference had agreed the Soviets could claim US$10 billion from Germany. However, this agreement was only agreed in principle and never formally ratified.

The Russians continue their argument in vague language, 'This list of measures taken by the control Council and the high Command of the Soviet Military administration in Germany connected with enemy property, including cultural valuables, proves that Allied countries were guided by the same principle, which was one of the bases of the peace agreement.' They had the right, 'to take, confiscate, or liquidate... any enemy property.'[27]

The Russians also claim that if they had signed a peace treaty with Germany they would have demanded and been granted restitutions as compensation. However, the Allies never signed a peace treaty with Germany because the Allies and the Soviet Union never agreed on the status of the divided country. Relations between the two countries broke down shortly after the war, resulting in the 40-year stand-off and arms race of the cold war. Irina Antonova, the current Director of the Pushkin Museum, who can be seen in the corner of a famous 1945 photograph of trucks being unpacked outside the museum said, ‘If the law about federal property is adopted and the paintings and other art objects that are now in possession are treated as the property of Russia, I hope that international approval of the decision will follow.’ This view is popular with the general Russian public.

In the mid 1990s Russia became more belligerent, with the development of her enormous oil and gas reserves. Exhibitions of looted artworks began with the landmark ‘Impressionist and post-Impressionist masterpieces from German private collections’, which opened at the Hermitage on 9th February 1995. In his opening speech, Mikhail Piotrovsky, the Director of the Hermitage said that the crime had not been in taking these masterpieces from Germany but that they had been kept from public view for 50 years.

Visitors were stunned by the quality of Degas’ *Place de la Concorde*, Gauguin’s *Two Sisters* and van Gogh’s last painting, *White House at Night*. The Pushkin Museum then held its own exhibition and visitors saw Goya’s *Lola Jiminez*, Daumier’s *Revolt* from the Gerstenberg collection, Manet’s *Rista Mauri* from the Koehler collection and Renoir’s *Madame Chocquet at the Window* from Karznow castle.

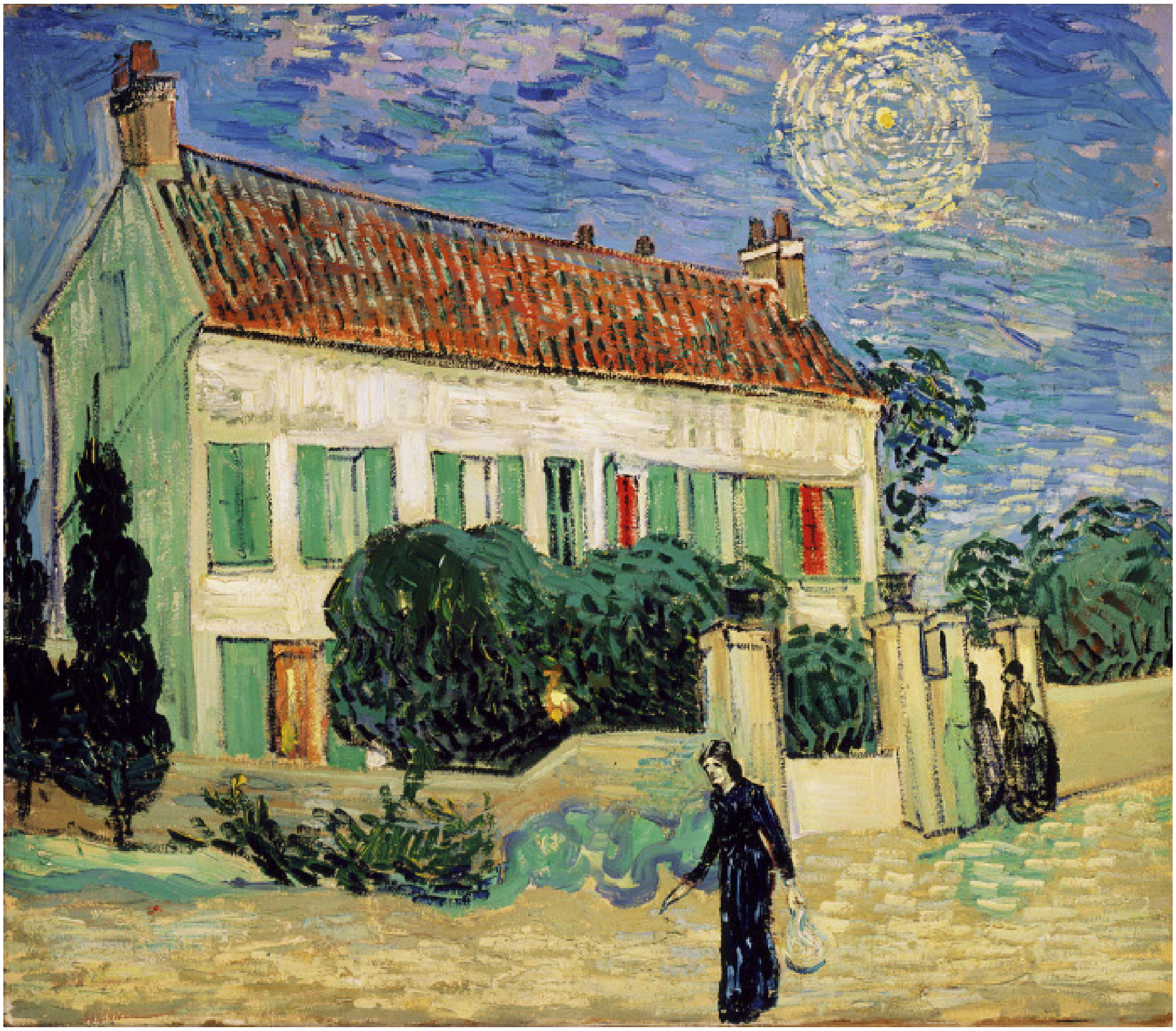

Piti Teina
P Gauguin 92

***Two Sisters* (1892) by Paul Gauguin (1843-1903) from the Otto Krebs Collection**

Russia continues to address restitution with evasion and belligerence, while hinting at compromise. Belligerence seems to rise and fall with their confidence which is tied to the oil price. With oil reaching US$150 a barrel Russia's position seems to have hardened from the already intransigent position adopted in the 1990s. From 1945 until 1991 Russia simply denied it had trophy art and implied it had been destroyed at the end of the war.

In 1990 President Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany signed the Treaty on Good-Neighbourliness, Partnership and Cooperation. Article 16 stated that, 'lost or unlawfully transferred art treasures which are located in their territory will be returned to their owners or their successors.'[28]

At the time of the treaty, Germany was unaware of the scale of looted artworks in the USSR. However, in 1991 the first of several articles was published by Konstantin Akinsha and Grigorii Kozlov in an American art journal (*ARTnews*), revealing the size of the looted holdings of trophy art in Russia, a story quickly picked up by *Izvestia* and other Russian newspapers.



White House at Night **(1890) by Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890).**

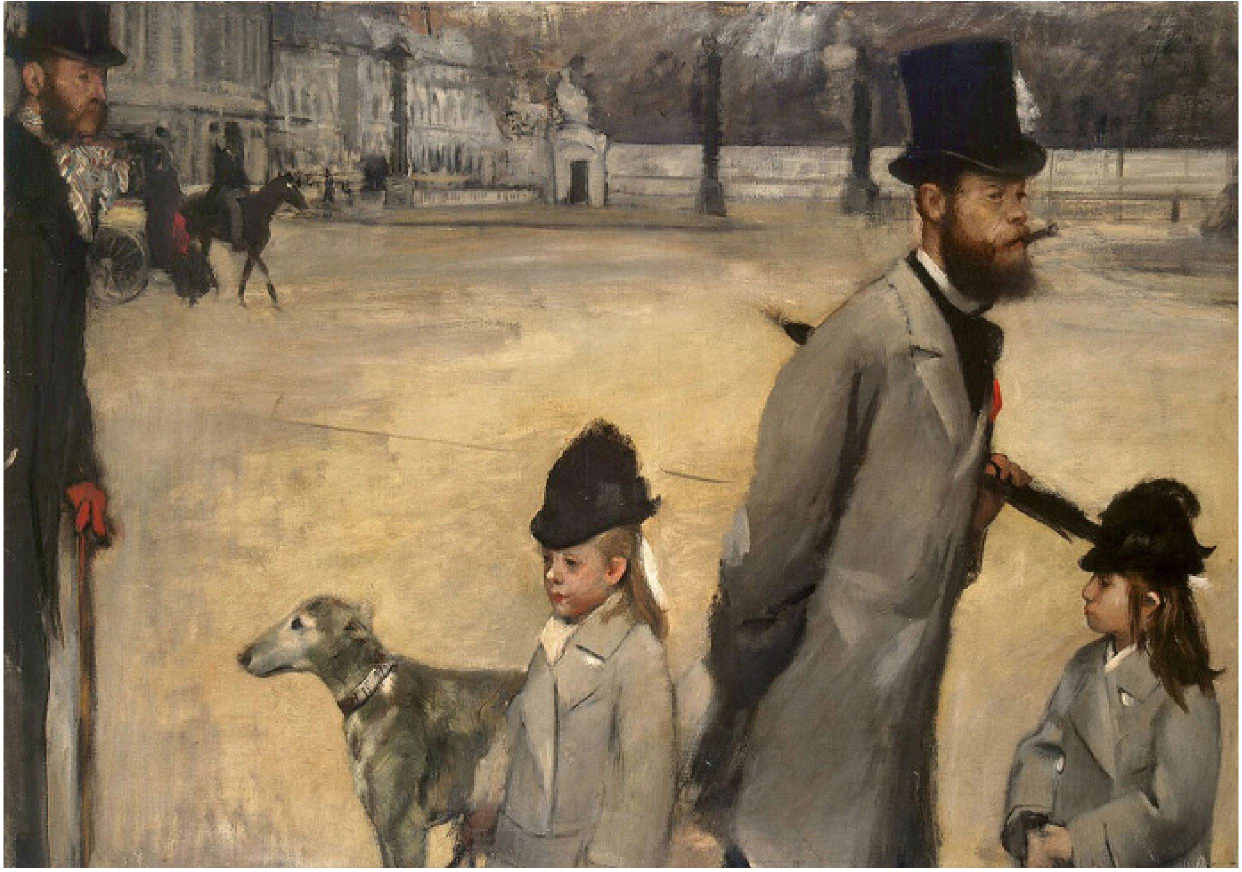
Kozlov, a curator at the Pushkin Museum, was summoned to the office of the Director, Irina Antonova, who got straight to the point, ‘How did you dare to write about the trophy artworks when you have nothing to do with them - and in a foreign magazine? You know the state importance of this problem and your responsibilities not to spread information about it.’ Antonova continued:

> ‘It’s none of your business, it’s the responsibility of the Museum administration. What did you think you would accomplish with your article?’
>
> ‘I wanted to tell the truth,’ replied Kozlov.
>
> ‘There are different truths,’ said Antonova.
>
> ‘I believe there is only one truth,’ said Kozlov.

‘There are also foolish truths and wise truths, and your truth is foolish. There is also justice. You are young and inexperienced. You didn’t see the Peterhof burned down, but I saw it. The Germans committed terrible crimes in our country, and the highest justice is on our side. We don’t need to justify ourselves; we can dictate our conditions.’

‘Among the trophy artworks are masterpieces of world culture that are hidden, stolen from world civilisation. And we are lying when we say those things are not in the USSR.’

‘It’s demagoguery!’ shouted Antonova. whilst talking about the victims of the war whose lives been had paid for by the trophies and how Kozlov had betrayed their legacy. ‘You could have provoked a situation where they,’ she pointed at the ceiling, ‘will become afraid and return everything free of charge!’



Place de la Concorde **(1875) by Edgar Degas (1834-1917)**

Both Akinsha and Kozlov started receiving harassment from the KGB and both are now research fellows at the Bremen Kunstverein. The Duma (Russian parliament’s lower house) started to draft a bill to declare that all artworks in Russian museums belong to Russia irrespective of their provenance and in 2000 passed a law that distinguishes between illegal trophies taken without military sanction (private looting) and legal trophies taken with military sanction (all the WWII trophy art removed by the trophy brigades). The act elaborates, saying that Russia didn't start the war and it views the trophy art as partial compensation for the loss of Russian artworks and infrastructure and 25 million Russian lives lost.

In 2005, on the sixtieth anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany, President Putin appeared to hint, as Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev had done, that some restitution might be possible, saying that Russia, 'would like to resolve it in a way that does not harm relations, but makes them better.'[29] However, a look at how Russia secured its national collections shows that it is entirely comfortable with confiscation and looting as an acceptable way of building up the national patrimony.

The leading Russian museums, the Pushkin in Moscow and the Hermitage in St Petersburg have been constructed out of looted collections. The core collections were confiscated in 1918 from the Royal Collection of the tsars and other leading Russian aristocrats such as the Demidovs, Vorontsovs and Sheremetevs. The Impressionist and post-Impressionist collections of the mercantile collectors Schukin and Morozov provide the basis for their later holdings. The trophy art acquired in WWII has added to every department of the museums as well as decorating countless government buildings, hospitals and sanatoriums.

What is certain is that Russia still has at least 1,000,000 art objects looted from Germany after the war. Much of this is still hidden in depositories around Russia, often in poor condition. Looting 2,500,000 art objects puts Stalin as probably the major art thief of all time, and the real figure is probably much higher. Tragically, this significant part of the European Art collection is not available for public view or study. Despite President Putin's recent vague hints it seems that Russia has no intention of returning this art. Perhaps the final word, should go to an elderly WWII veteran of the Red Army who said in 1995, 'I don't think Russia should return art booty to Germany. We suffered a lot from the war, and those treasures should be viewed as a partial compensation for the damage and sufferings.'

[1] Akinsha, Konstantin, and Kozlov, Grigorii, *Beautiful Loot, The Soviet Plunder of Europe's Art Treasures,* Random House, New York, 1995, p. 98.

[2] Beevor, Antony, *Berlin: the Downfall,* Penguin, London, 2002, p. 28.

3 Akinsha and Kozlov, *op. cit.,* p. 23.

4 Beevor, *op. cit.,* p. 11.

5 Akinsha and Kozlov, *op. cit.,* p. 45.

6 *Ibid.,* p. 22.

7 *Ibid.,* p. 24.

8 *Ibid.,* p. 34.

9 *Ibid.,* p. 48.

10 Sebag Montefiore, Simon, *Stalin, Court of the Red Tsar,* Phoenix, 2003, p. 399.

11 *Ibid.,* p. 386.

12 ‘Voennie Arkivi Rossii’, No. 1 (1993), *Military Archives of Russia,* p. 190.

13 *Ibid.,* p. 210.

14 Howard, Richard, *Unpublished Memoir.*

15 Vishnevsky, Vsevolod, *Sobranie Sochineni* (collected works), Vol. 5, Khudlit, Moscow, 1960, p. 275.

16 Akinsha and Kozlov, *op. cit.,* p. 71.

17 Howard, *op. cit.*

18 Akinsha and Kozlov, *op. cit.,* p. 99.

19 *Ibid.,* p. 124.

20 Letter from Rototayev to Deputy Minister of Culture, 29th April 1955, p. 177, quoted by Akinsha and Kozlov, *op. cit.,* p. 129.

21 Akinsha and Kozlov, *op. cit.,* p. 165.

22 *Ibid.,* p. 189.

23 *Statement of the Soviet Council of Ministries,* quoted in the Official Soviet press, 31st March 1955.

24 Akinsha and Kozlov, *op. cit.,* p. 202.

25 *Ibid.,* p. 209.

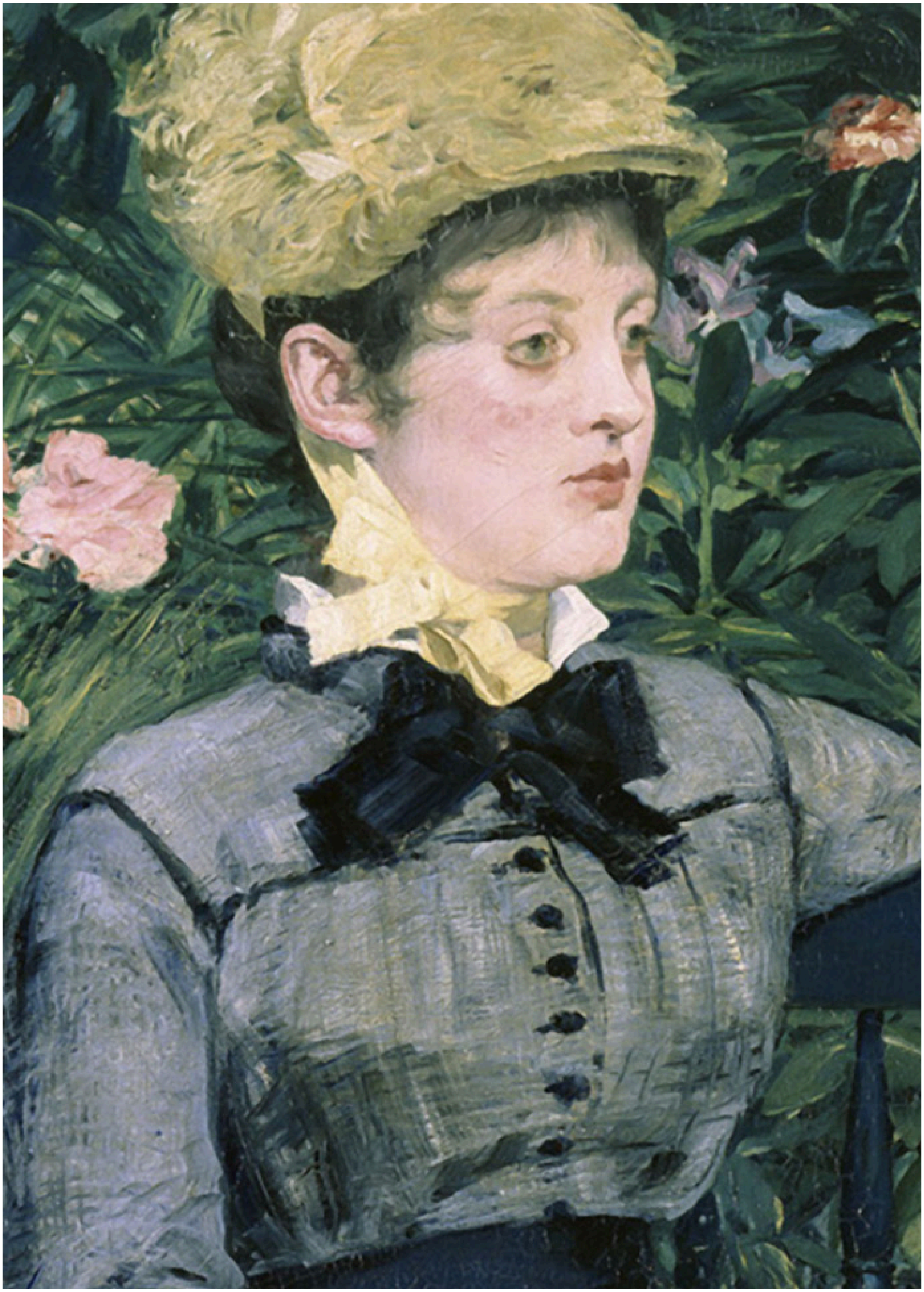
26 *Ibid.,* p. 249.

27 *Ibid.,* p. 253.

28 *Ibid.,* p. 234.

29 *Ibid.,* p. 235.

14 - 1945, the US army



Detail: Madame Manet in the Conservatory (*c.* 1879) by Edouard Manet (1832-1883).

> ‘They had fantastic stuff there [in the US army collection point at Wiesbaden] ... In the office, across the whole back wall, was Watteau’s ‘Embarkation for Cythera’, and a wonderful Degas, where you look up through the orchestra pit, through the beards of the musicians, at those elegant dancers. It was from the Frankfurt Museum ... Just that office alone was worth the price of admission to World War II.’
>
> - Bernard Taper, art intelligence officer with the MFAA, in charge of the US collection point at Wiesbaden.[1]

Various groups such as American Defense, Harvard Group and the American Council of Learned Societies had begun lobbying for a national organisation affiliated with the military to protect European art and monuments before the USA entered World War II. Francis Henry Taylor, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art took the idea to Washington and President Franklin Roosevelt established the ‘American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas’ on 23rd June 1943. Known as the Roberts Commission, and headquartered in the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, it provided lists of cultural treasures and monuments to the military. However, more important was its establishment of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives program (MFAA) to assist in the restitution and protection of cultural property during and after WWII. Returning artworks as opposed to looting them overturned the principle that the conqueror was entitled to the spoils of war, practised since the Roman Empire, except for the restitution made after the Congress of Vienna in 1815.

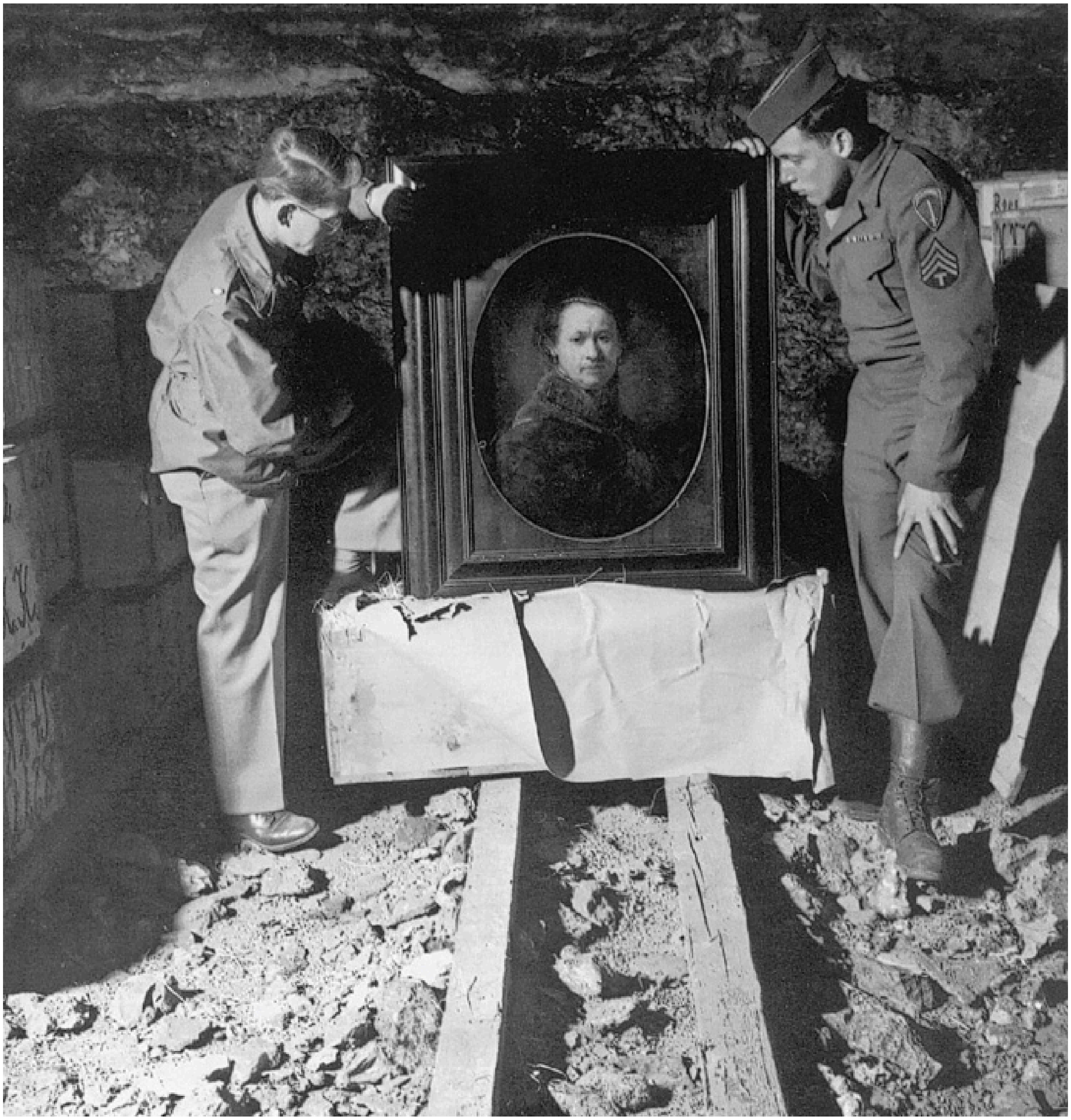
The MFAA consisted of around 400 enlisted civilians, known as the Monuments Men who were mainly art historians or museum curators. After the war Captain Harry Greer became Director of the Frick Collection; Lieutenant Commander James Rorimer became Director of the Metropolitan Museum; Sherman Lee became Director of the Cleveland Museum of Art; and Major Otto Wittman Director of the Toledo Museum of Art, to name just a few.

General Dwight Eisenhower, commander of Allied Forces, inspects gold bars taken from Jews by the Nazis and stashed in the Heilbronn Salt Mines, Germany. The treasures were uncovered by allied forces after the defeat of Nazi Germany in May, 1945.

The Monument Men.

General Dwight Eisenhower supported the MFAA by forbidding looting and the destruction of cultural objects or important buildings, prohibiting billets in monuments and ordering the regular army to assist the MFAA. Lieutenant Colonel Sir Leonard Woolley, the esteemed archaeologist who excavated Ur in Mesopotamia and served in the MFAA observed:

> Prior to this war, no army had thought of protecting the monuments of the country in which and with which it was at war, and there were no precedents to follow ... All this was changed by a general order issued by Supreme Commander-in-Chief [General Eisenhower] just before he left Algiers, an order accompanied by a personal order to all Commanders ... the good name of the Army depended in great measure on the respect which it showed to the art heritage of the modern world.[2]



***Self Portrait* by Rembrandt was stored for safe keeping in the Heilbronn mines by museum officials from Kurlsruhe. The painting is being examined by Lt. Dale V Ford and Sgt Ettlinger.**

The Monuments Men accompanied Allied forces as they advanced liberating Nazi-occupied territories. They operated under the operations branch of SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force), which was commanded by Eisenhower. In Florence, for example, they provided aerial photographs of important monuments and museums to help Allied bomber pilots avoid destroying them. Where they found damaged monuments and churches, engineer units tried to shore them up or repair them. Captain Deane Keller, a professor at Yale before the war, managed to help save the Campo Santo in Pisa after a mortar round started a fire that melted the lead roof which bled down the famous fourteenth-century frescoed walls. Countless other churches, artworks and monuments were saved by the Monuments Men and they often entered liberated towns before regular troops.

By 1945, the US army had developed an infrastructure for artwork repatriation. On the 22nd March 1945, advance units of Lieutenant General George Patton's Third Army crossed the Rhine into the heart of Germany and cut into the Soviet zone around Berlin. On 4th April the Third Battalion of the 358th Infantry Regiment, Ninetieth Infantry Division, consolidated its position around the village of Merkers, around 200 miles south-west of Berlin.

On 6th April two military policemen, Privates Clyde Harmon and Antony Kline picked up two Frenchwomen who were violating a restriction order by wandering around the 90th Division command post at Kieselbach. Under questioning the women mentioned that there had recently been a large quantity of gold moved to the nearby Wintershall AG's Kaiseroda potassium mine at Merkers. They thought the gold was from the Reichsbank in Berlin and also mentioned there were artworks from the museums of Berlin all stored 1600 feet below ground.

Pte. John Long, Co. 118th infantry, of Chillicothe, Ohio, guards bullion in the 'silver room'. The total value of wire, sheets, coins and bullion in this room is estimated at about $2,200,000. The prodigious task of taking inventory of the millions of dollars in Nazi loot, found in such concentration camps as Buchenwald and Dachau, was assigned to the foreign exchange depository, a branch of the Finance division of Omgus.

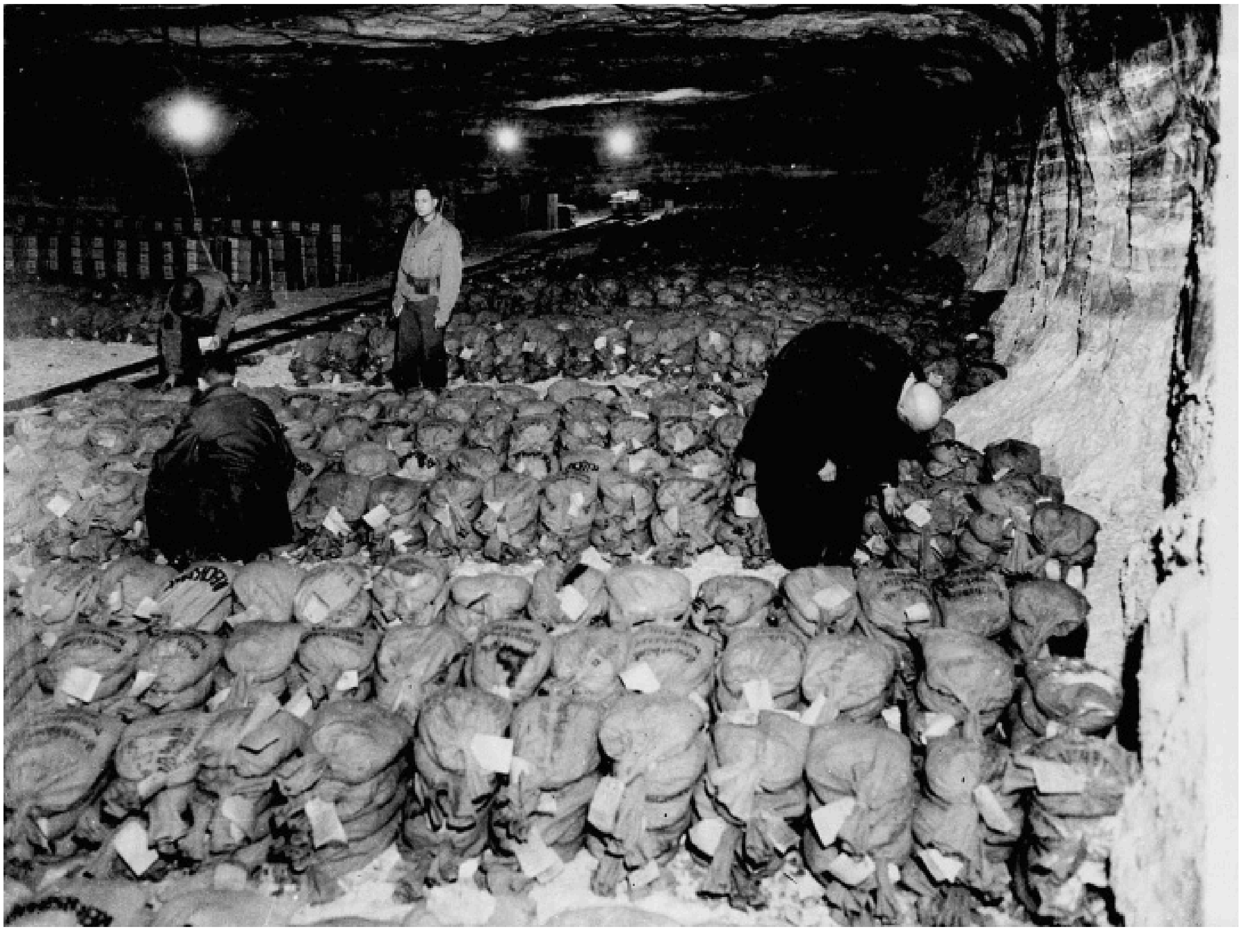
That afternoon the story reached Lieutenant Colonel William A. Russell, the Ninetieth Infantry Division G-5 (civilian affairs) officer. In addition to mine personnel, he found Dr Paul Otwin Rave, curator of the German State Museum in Berlin and Werner Veick, the head cashier of the Reichsbank's foreign notes department. Veick indicated that the entire reserve of the Reichsbank was stored in the mine. Although they had succeeded in moving much of the material onto a train, they had eventually given up and repacked the items in the mine to wait for the Americans.

The Americans secured the various mine entrances at Merkers, Leimbach, Ransbach and Springen that provided access to the 35 miles of underground tunnels. Major General Herbert L. Ernest, the Ninetieth Infantry Division commanding officer, asked for additional forces and established a perimeter defence around the main entrance at Merkers. The information about the find was relayed to the Corps Commander Major

General Manton S. Eddy who passed it up to Patton who ordered that it be kept secret until they had confirmed what was down there.

The following morning, at around 10 am Colonel Russell went down the mine with several other American officers and some mine officials. Nearly 2000 feet below the surface they found 550 bags of Reich marks stacked against the walls. The main vault was blocked by a three-foot-thick brick wall with a heavy steel door which Patton ordered Eddy to blow. Using a half-stick of dynamite the engineers blew the door and the Americans entered the vault, which was approximately 75 foot wide, 150 foot long with a 12 foot ceiling. Although well lit, there was poor ventilation. A railway track lay down the middle of the cavern. A hush fell over them as they took in what they saw. On either side of the railway track, stretching to the back of the cavern were more than 7000 bags of gold, laid out in 20 rows, around knee height with approximately 2.5 ft between rows. Hundreds of boxes were full of gold and silver jewellery, church ornaments, table and silverware, and bales of currency.

The Americans made an inventory, which revealed 235 tons of gold and US$519,805,802 in cash. There were: 55 carts of gold bullion, 8198 bars of gold bullion, hundreds of bags of gold items, 1300 bags of gold Reich marks, French gold francs, British gold pounds, 711 bags of American twenty-dollar gold pieces, hundreds of bags of gold and silver coins, hundreds of bags of foreign currency, 9 bags of valuable coins, 2380 bags and 1300 boxes of Reich marks (2.76 billion Reich marks), 20 silver bars, 40 bags of silver bars, 55 bags and 63 boxes of silver plate, 1 bag of platinum bars and 110 assorted bags from various countries.



Part of an estimated 100 tons of gold bullion hidden in a salt mine near Merkers, southwest of Gotha, Germany, found April 7, 1945 by 3rd U.S. Army troops commanded by General George S. Patton. Aided by a Reichsbank official, in civilian clothes, 3rd Army finance officers check over money bags. Stored with the gold were crates of art treasures and vast amounts of currency.

In the Versailles Palace outside Paris, Colonel Bernard Bernstein, on General Eisenhower's SHAEF staff, read an article in the military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*, detailing a find of gold by American troops in a salt mine at Merkers. Then his telephone rang and he was informed that Patton had asked Eisenhower to take responsibility for the gold and that he should take over the gold on behalf of Eisenhower. Bernstein left immediately on a small plane, having selected the Reichsbank building in Frankfurt as a suitable repository for the gold.

Bernstein had a quick look over the contents of the mine before explaining to Patton that the contents of the mine needed to be moved fast. Patton objected that he needed his soldiers elsewhere, 'There is no chance the Germans can push me out of this area. It is safe to leave the gold and other treasures down in that mine.'

Bernstein replied, ‘I don’t for a minute question the correctness of your statement, but under the Big Three arrangement, this part of Germany will be taken over by the Russians after the fighting ends and we certainly want to get all this out of here before the Russians get here.’

Amazingly, Patton said, ‘I didn’t know that at all, but I will do everything possible to facilitate your mission.’[3] By 11th April Bernstein had established a control centre at Merkers and immediately revisited the mine, this time with Dr Paul Otwin Rave, Curator of the Berlin Museums. Rave explained that the mine contained a quarter of the contents of the 14 principal Prussian state museums, including 45 cases from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum. Bernstein later explained, ‘Because of my background with the Treasury Department and working for a large law firm that provided attorneys for the Old Farmers Loan and Trust company in New York, the first thing you do is, you want to know what you have got. Make sure that you are accounting for it properly.’[4]

On 12th April, at 10.30 am, Generals Dwight Eisenhower, George Patton, Omar Bradley and Otto Weyland arrived at the mineshaft. Patton joked that if the lift cable snapped, ‘promotions in the United States Army would be considerably stimulated’. Eisenhower responded, ‘Okay George, that’s enough, no more cracks until we are above ground.’[5]

Heil Hitler!

Members of the U.S. Army with a box of shipments Berliner Spedition Hertling, the mine under a sign with a swastika and the words 'Heil Hitler'. The Nazi army had hidden in the Merkers salt mine, DM of the Reichsbank, gold and works of art

Eisenhower wrote, 'Crammed into suitcases and trunks and other containers was a great amount of gold and silver plate and ornaments obviously looted from private dwellings throughout Europe ... all the articles had been flattened by hammer blows, obviously to save storage space ... apparently pending an opportunity to melt them down into gold or silver bars.'[6] They were shown 207 boxes containing thousands of gold and silver dental crowns, bridges, plates, silver tableware, watch cases, eyeglasses, gold wedding rings, precious stones, pearls and assorted currency from the inmates of concentration camps. Patton wrote later that he saw, 'a number of suitcases filled with jewellery, such as silver and gold cigarette cases, wrist watch cases, spoons, forks, vases. Gold-filled teeth, false teeth etc.' acquired by 'bandit methods.'[7] Near the end of the one-hour inspection Bradley turned to Patton and said, 'If these were the old free-booting days when a soldier kept his loot you'd be the richest man in the world.' The generals examined the plates used by the Reichsbank for printing currency, and artworks from the German museums. Patton, who knew nothing about art, observed in his diary, 'The ones I saw were worth, in my opinion, about $2.50, and were of the type normally seen in bars in America.'[8]

Two days later at 9 am on 14th April, thirty 10-ton trucks with additional jeeps with quarter-ton trailers arrived. Loading continued throughout the day and the following night. Three trucks were crammed with artworks and the rest with gold and currency and each truck given armed guards. The 85-mile route to Frankfurt was closed to other traffic. The Reichsbank was secured by eight M8 tanks and ten anti-aircraft guns and 700 soldiers including the guards on the trucks. Spotlights illuminated the building at night and guards kept watch.

The Americans had removed 235 tons of treasure from the Russian zone, including 569,726 pounds of gold. By mid August, the US Treasury Department and the Bank of England placed the total value of recovered gold at (1945) US$262,213,000. They had recovered 98.6% of the US$255.96 million of gold shown on the closing balance of the Precious Metals Department of the Berlin Reichsbank.

Art Loot in American hands. Füssen, Germany: While a lieutenant checks his list (background), 7th Army soldiers carry three valuable paintings down the steps of Neuschwanstein Castle at Füssen, Germany, where they were a part of the collection looted by the Nazis from conquered countries. The pictures are, right to left: Cat and Mirror by Chardin (1749); a work by Brouwer belonging to the Weissman Collection; and a portrait of a lady marked Rothschild Collection (16th Century). Hermann Goering presumably intended to use this priceless collection in forming his art gallery at Linz, to be named after him and presented to the Reich on his 60th birthday.

The Nazis had started the war with gold reserves of 34.2 tons and looted a further 558.28 tons from occupied territories, bringing their total to 592.48 tons. The Americans recovered 350.47 tons at the end of the war, meaning that 242.01 tons of gold had disappeared. Around 1.2 billion Swiss francs worth was laundered by the Swiss National Bank into Swiss francs to pay for goods for the Reich. The Swiss franc was the only convertible gold currency and Switzerland the only country operating a relatively free monetary exchange. The Swiss National Bank earned US$28m on the exchange, but it conducted it under pressure of being surrounded by 80 million hostile Germans to the north and 40 million hostile Italians to the south.

US investigators established that some of the remaining gold went through Madrid and Zurich. Most likely after that it went to countries such as Argentina, Paraguay and Chile, which offered safe haven to Nazi war criminals and financed their subsequent lives. Between July and August 1945, five U-boats landed in Patagonia, which still has the largest German community in South America, with at least 50 high-ranking Nazis, including Mengele, Eichmann, Bormann, Pavelic and Priebke.

The Merkers gold was eventually turned over to the Inter-Allied Reparation Agency and then to the Tripartite Commission for the Restitution of monetary gold (TGC) for distribution to the central banks of the countries from where it had been stolen by the Nazis. Cold war considerations meant that some of this gold was not returned until 1996. In December 1997, at an International Gold Conference held in London, over 15 countries agreed to relinquish their claims to their share of the remaining 5.5 metric tons (worth around 60 million dollars) still held by the TGC and donate it to the Nazi persecution fund for survivors of the Holocaust. In 1988, the TGC announced its task was finished and disbanded, leaving unsolved what happened to the unrecovered 242.01 tons.

US troops in Ellingen, Bavaria. A US soldier inspects Nazi art loot which is stored in a church (24 April 1945)

In early May 1945, Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Webb, the British MFAA chief officer at Eisenhower's headquarters, proposed that US forces should select some buildings at strategic points that could be used to receive the large quantities of cultural property before they were dispersed to their legitimate owners. Eisenhower was supportive, but it was difficult to find suitable buildings that hadn't been damaged and were sufficiently secure to store the artworks.

In addition to the artworks of the Berlin museums at the Kaiseroda mine at Merkers, at Hitler's retreat at Berchtesgaden, the 101st Airborne division, known as the 'Screaming Eagles', found more than 1000 paintings and sculptures from the collection of Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering.

At Benterode the Americans found four coffins containing the remains of Germany's greatest leaders including Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and Frederick the Great (Frederick II of Prussia). There were also 271 paintings behind a locked door and 5 ft-thick brick wall, from the Palace of Sanssouci in Potsdam.

At Neuschwanstein, Captain Edward Adams found over 6000 items plus records from Alfred Rosenberg's ERR (Einzatztab Reichsleiter Rosenberg) that had looted the Parisian Jewish collections. He shipped over 49 freight cars of artworks to Paris. More than 6000 paintings were found at the salt mines at Alt Aussee that housed the contents of the Führerbau in Munich. These were for the intended Linz Museum. Alt Aussee's treasures, contained masterpieces such as Michelangelo's *Madonna of Bruges* from the Church of Our Lady of Bruges, Jan van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece* from Saint Bavo Cathedral in Ghent, and Vermeer's *The Artist's Studio* and *The Astronomer*.

The paintings from the Capodimonte museum in Naples, which had been stolen by the Hermann Goering Tank Division (Fallschirn - Panzer Division 1 Hermann Goering) at Monte Cassino, and then been considered 'too hot' by Goering to hang at Karinhall, were also found at Alt Aussee. In a jail cell in San Leonardo in northern Italy the contents of the Uffizi were discovered, including masterpieces by Giovanni Bellini, Filippo Lippi and Sandro Botticelli.

The Munich Central Collecting Point (MCCP).

By July 1945, principal ‘collecting points’ had been established at Munich, Wiesbaden and Offenbach with feeding depots at Oberammergau, Nuremberg, Marburg, Heilbronn and Bad Wildungen. The Wiesbaden collection point was established by Captain Walter I. Farmer in a building that had been erected in 1920 and designed as an art museum. During the war the building had been used by the Luftwaffe and before Farmer commandeered it, the US 12th Army had used it as a clothing warehouse.

This collection point became the major recipient of German-owned art. All the art from German museums that had been stored in the Grasleben, Benterode, Ransbach and Kaiseroda mines was sent to Wiesbaden. The most valuable art from the Berlin and Frankfurt museums filled 75 out of the 300 rooms. The room at Wiesbaden that contained the finest artworks was named the ‘Treasure Room’ and housed the Egyptian collection of the Berlin Museum. When the Egyptians heard that the 3000-year-old statue of *Nefertiti* was with the Americans at Wiesbaden, they launched a lawsuit to have the statue returned, but the US authorities ignored the claim and returned the statue to Berlin. The Wiesbaden collection point received around 700,000 individual objects.

Most of the Americans’ efforts went into repatriating artworks, but they decided that they wanted some loot themselves. Captain Walter Farmer received a cable from the Roberts Commission in Washington on or around 5th November, 1945 that read, ‘Higher headquarters desires that immediate preparations be made for prompt shipment to the UNITEK(US) of a selection of at least two zero zero German works of art of greatest importance. Most of these are now in Art Collection Point Wiesbaden. Selections will be made by personnel from headquarters European Theatre who will assist in packing and shipment by motor transport to Bremen.’ The cable also demanded the addition of the Czernin Vermeer and Nazi loot from Vienna that was held at the central collecting point in Munich. Farmer and the other MFAA men believed the artworks had been specifically chosen to plug gaps in the collection of the National Gallery in Washington.

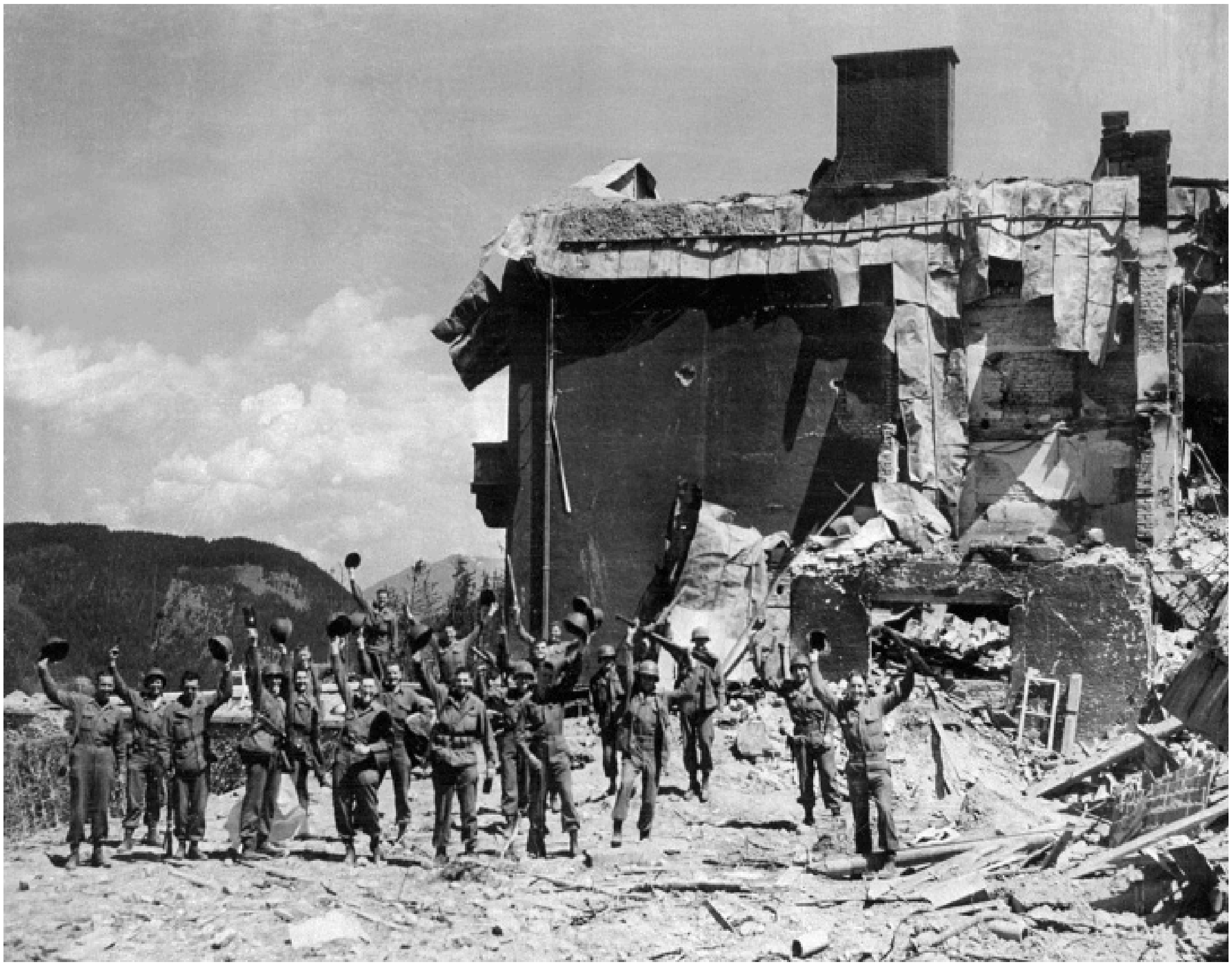
Works of art were to be drawn from all over Germany but, when the MFAA men explained that it was not feasible to collect artworks from so far, the commission lowered its target to 202 pictures from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin. The MFAA men nicknamed the project, ‘Westward Ho, Watteau’ and organised a defence against the shipment. Thirty-two of the 35 MFAA officers assigned to Germany supported the protest and on the 7th

November 1945 sent a letter to the top American in their MFAA office at SHAEF, Major Bancel LaFarge, saying that taking these artworks was, ‘neither morally tenable nor trustworthy’ and that, ‘No historical grievances will rankle so long, or be the cause of so much justified bitterness, as the removal, for any reason, of the part of the heritage of any nation, even if that heritage may be interpreted as a prize of war.’[9] The letter also points out that the Allies were currently prosecuting Nazis such as Alfred Rosenberg for looting.

The idea had been suggested at the July 1945 Potsdam conference by General Lucius Clay and seconded by President Harry S. Truman. After 3 years of debate, the artwork was shipped in a special railway car to Le Havre on the French coast, where the 45 cases were loaded on the *USS James Parker* before sailing for the National Gallery in Washington.

Other art removed to the USA was, ‘all collections of art relating or dedicated to the perpetuation of Nazism’. There was a large school of art, not unlike the Socialist Realism school of the Soviets that Hitler had encouraged to glorify the Nazi war effort. The Soviet school is better known because all the Nazi art disappeared in 1945. Loyal dogs, muscular and dedicated soldiers, faithful women working in factories and in the fields and similar subject matter dominate the school. In the autumn of 1945, Captain Gordon W. Gilkey of the Army Air Force was sent to Germany to round up all art either created by the Nazi hierarchy or produced to glorify Nazism and he extended his mandate to include any artwork created by a German in the twentieth century.

An annual exhibition of these paintings had been held in an exhibition room at the Führerbau in Munich and Hitler had regularly bought at least a third of the paintings exhibited to support the 80 artists who painted in his art unit. There are some excellent but little-known artists included in this group.



Hitler's hideout in Berchtesgaden, Germany captured by the Allies, in 1945.

Gilkey managed to collect over 9000 paintings including three WWI watercolours by Hitler, which he found at the collection point at Wiesbaden. By March 1947, these paintings were stored in the Pentagon by the Historical Properties section of the US army. Many have no Nazi connection, depicting landscapes and portraits, and some depict the desolation and tragedy of war with remarkable sensitivity.

In 1981, the 97th Congress passed a bill authorising their return to Germany. About one-third of the paintings have been returned leaving the rest in the ownership of the US army. The Air Force possesses 563 paintings depicting aircraft and dogfights. Some of the collection is on display at the Wright-Patterson Museum and the rest, including the watercolours by Hitler, are at the US army's Military History Center in downtown Washington, DC.

The Library of Congress felt a need to obtain German material published between 1939 and 1945. Twenty-six librarians were despatched to Germany and Austria, and the Library established offices at Munich, Frankfurt, Wiesbaden and Berlin. Reuben Preiss, Deputy Librarian of the Congress Mission said the mission was extended, ‘to get what is to be got, to distribute this to American libraries, and then go after the gaps which show up in our holdings when the inventory has been made.’[10]

819,022 non-Nazi books and more than 1000 periodicals were shipped to the Library of Congress in Washington, including a first edition of Goethe’s Stella; ein Schauspiel fur iebende in funf Akten and Johann Gustav Büsching’s epic Das Lied der Nibelungen. The Library of Congress also took 141 collections of pamphlets, books, bound sets of periodicals, maps, photographs, and newspapers, which were shipped in 9,598 containers and contained an estimated 1,500,000 items.

A letter written by Reuben Preiss to Luther H. Evans, the Director of the Library of Congress, on 23rd March 1946:

> The first thing to keep in mind is that eight or nine out of every ten confiscated volumes that find their way into the Library of Congress will have been collected and shipped by Army document teams ... I will not maintain that in the vast sweep of the document teams some of the materials may have been scooped up which should have remained untouched ... Malpractice has undoubtedly occurred at times, as it will in any large operation ... but I am convinced of the moral cleanliness of the operation as a whole ... (however) one day we are going to face accusations.[11]

The collection of Friedrich Rehse, which consisted of political posters, books, newspapers, pamphlets, caricatures and periodicals was taken in its entirety. Rehse had been forced to sell the collection in the 1920s. The successful purchaser was the Nazi party. In the fall of 1945, 100 cases of the collection were found in the cellar of the Nazi Bürgenbraukeller in Munich and moved to the Munich collection point before being shipped to the Library of Congress. The 77-year-old Rehse complained to Don Travis, a representative of the Library of Congress, who supervised its despatch to Washington. Travis noted, ‘He is an earnest collector and had brought together an extremely unusual collection of ephemera but in the development and arrangement of this stuff he has also shown himself an incorruptible dilettante,’ adding with the finality of the victor that, ‘the matter is a closed affair and that all hope of recovery is gone.’[12]

The Library of Congress also took Hitler’s private library, found split between the Berghof, his mountain retreat near Berchtesgaden; his residence in Munich; hidden in the salt mine at Alt Aussee and intended for the Linz Museum; and in a warehouse at Berchtesgaden, which housed the books from the Reich Chancellery in Berlin. Hitler's library remained at Freising, 25 miles north of Munich, until it was shipped to Washington in 1952. The collection contains many volumes of Goethe and Wagner, some given as gifts by Richard Wagner's son, Siegfried, and his wife Winifred, who appears to have been as fascinated by Hitler as Diana Mitford and explained in 1973, 'To have met him is an experience I would not have missed.'[13] Richard Wagner was a favourite composer of Hitler's and both men were vegetarians, loners and had an intense dislike of Jews.

Hitler's collection of 2000 books remains in the Rare Book Room of the Library of Congress. It contains numerous gifts from Nazi sub-leaders, authors and leading political and military figures of the time. Many deal with the Nazi party. There are no works of fiction or German Classics, but volumes on cost accounting, meditation and vegetarian cuisine as well as at least 100 serious religious books. There are gushing inscriptions such as, 'The very loved and deserving chancellor of the German Empire, Adolf Hitler, the true grapevine of the empire, God, the people of God, the Emmanuel of one for all and all for one' contained in the cover of *Kommet und vereinet euch im Volkerbund Gottes*, lending weight to Friedrich Nietzsche's observation that, 'Those who are very beautiful, very good and very powerful scarcely ever learn the truth about anything. In their presence we involuntarily lie.'[14] Another book, *Metaphysische Problems*, contains the dedication,'To the admired sister of our Führer in his devotion.' Few people knew Hitler had a sister and he made her use the last name 'Wolfe' to keep her identity a secret.

The Library of Congress collection also contains volumes from other high-ranking Nazi officials' libraries, including those of Martin Bormann, Julius Streicher, Alfred Rosenberg, Hans Frank, Sepp Dietrich, Joseph Goebbels and Hermann Goering. Heinrich Himmler's library was found intact at the Bavarian villa, Haus Schneewinkel, which he had constructed for his 32-year-old mistress, Hedwig Potthast. A T-Force memorandum observed, 'These documents will throw considerable light on Himmler's private life and early activities.' This collection was absorbed into the Library of Congress's general collection of 115 million books and the volumes are now hard to find.

The manuscript division of the Library of Congress eventually agreed to return a few of the seized collections, including the Rehse collection, to the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz, Germany, but they kept all the best material.

The United States also removed the photo and art collection of Heinrich Hoffmann who was Hitler's official photographer. Hoffman, although a drunk, had introduced Hitler to Eva Braun who was working in his studio as a clerk. Moving in homosexual circles in Munich and Berlin, he befriended 25-year-old Erna Goebke, who wore men's breeches and a monocle. On more than one occasion in nightclubs she tried to join Hitler's table with girlfriends, much to the Führer's discomfort. At the height of his success, and with money extracted from the Nazi party, Hoffman had offices in Riga, The Hague, Strasbourg, Paris, Munich, Vienna and Berlin.

Hoffman was arrested on 6th March 1946 and convicted by the German Denazification court for publishing anti-Semitic literature and copyright infringement and sentenced to 10 years in prison with all his property confiscated except 5000 marks (US$1,190). The USA German court's removed Hoffman's collection of more than 1,500,000 items and in October 1950 the collection was shipped in 66 large boxes to the adjutant general's office in Alexandria, Virginia before being transferred to the National Archives in Carlisle barracks.

In 1982, Billy Price, a Texan oilman teamed up with Hoffman's eldest son, Heinrich Hoffman, and his sister, Henrietta von Schirach, and jointly petitioned the US government to return the archive. In 1995, the US government offered Price US$8 million to drop the case, but the issue is still unresolved. Price, who has criticised the government's delaying tactics, observed in 1995, 'Two judges have died on this case, the court reporter is dead, and all the plaintiffs except me are dead.'[15]

On 7th May 1945, General George Patton and Secretary of War Patterson attended a performance of the Spanish Riding School at St Martin near Reid in Northern Austria. Seventy Lipizzaner stallions from the former Imperial Austrian court and the Spanish Riding School in Vienna had been sent to the private estate at St Martin for safekeeping in early 1945. The Lipizzaner breed had been developed by the Moors during their 700-year occupation of Spain by cross-breeding native Andalusian horses with Arab-Berber stock. The 'Spanish Riding School' in Vienna received stallions from the stud farm at Lipizza (Lipica) in Slovenia in order to train, preserve and instruct the classic arts of horsemanship.

The display so impressed Patton that he immediately placed the school under American protection. He ordered other Lipizzaner horses also to be moved to St Martin. As Patton's Third Army raced across Europe, they captured further German horse breeding farms, including several thousand horses. Patton, who liked horses, discussed the issue with Colonel Fred. L. Hamilton, chief of the US Army Remount branch, on a brief visit to Washington in August 1945. Hamilton asked Patton to return to the USA as much of the finest equestrian stock as he felt would benefit the US army horse breeding programme.

Perhaps anticipating what was to unfold, the Germans tried to hide their finest stallions in a remote shed. After bribing the grooms with cigarettes a magnificent chestnut stallion was revealed. A German vet muttered, 'Well, you have the best now. That is Nordlicht, the finest horse in Europe.' Colonel Hamilton concurred, 'This one horse alone would have been worth all the trouble and expense.'[16]

The Germans had taken the best horses from Poland and the Hungarian State Stud farm at Babolna as well as thoroughbreds from the stables of Baron Eduard Rothschild, Lord Derby and the Aga Khan. Hamilton travelled to the stud farms at Moscbach and Donauwörth and selected 152 animals for shipment to the USA. There were 64 thoroughbreds, 40 half breeds, 23 Arabians, 15 Arab Kinds, 9 Lipizzaners and 1 Russian horse. Hamilton tested the half-breeds and selected only the horses that could run 34 miles, whilst carrying 200 pounds, in 1 hour and 50 minutes. The Lipizzaners had a stud book going back to 1558 and the Arab Kinds from Hungary had maintained their original Arab characteristics and had pedigree stretching back to the early 1800s.

The horses were sent to Bremerhaven and shipped on the Stephen Austin to Newport News, Virginia in October 1945. They survived a 30-hour storm, which injured many of the animals. On Patton's orders, the horses were sent to the quartermaster depot in Front Royal, Virginia, where they were nursed back to health.

On 7th April 1946, they were billed as 'the finest horses in the world' and shown to the public. Nordlicht attracted the most attention and a breeder offered US$300,000 for him. *The Chronicle*, the horse breeder's magazine, commented that Nordlicht, 'is the cream of French, German and Hungarian blood stock. Nordlicht is one the finest young sire prospects in the world.'[17]

Breeders were notified that all the stallions would be offered out to the public for a stud fee of only US$10.

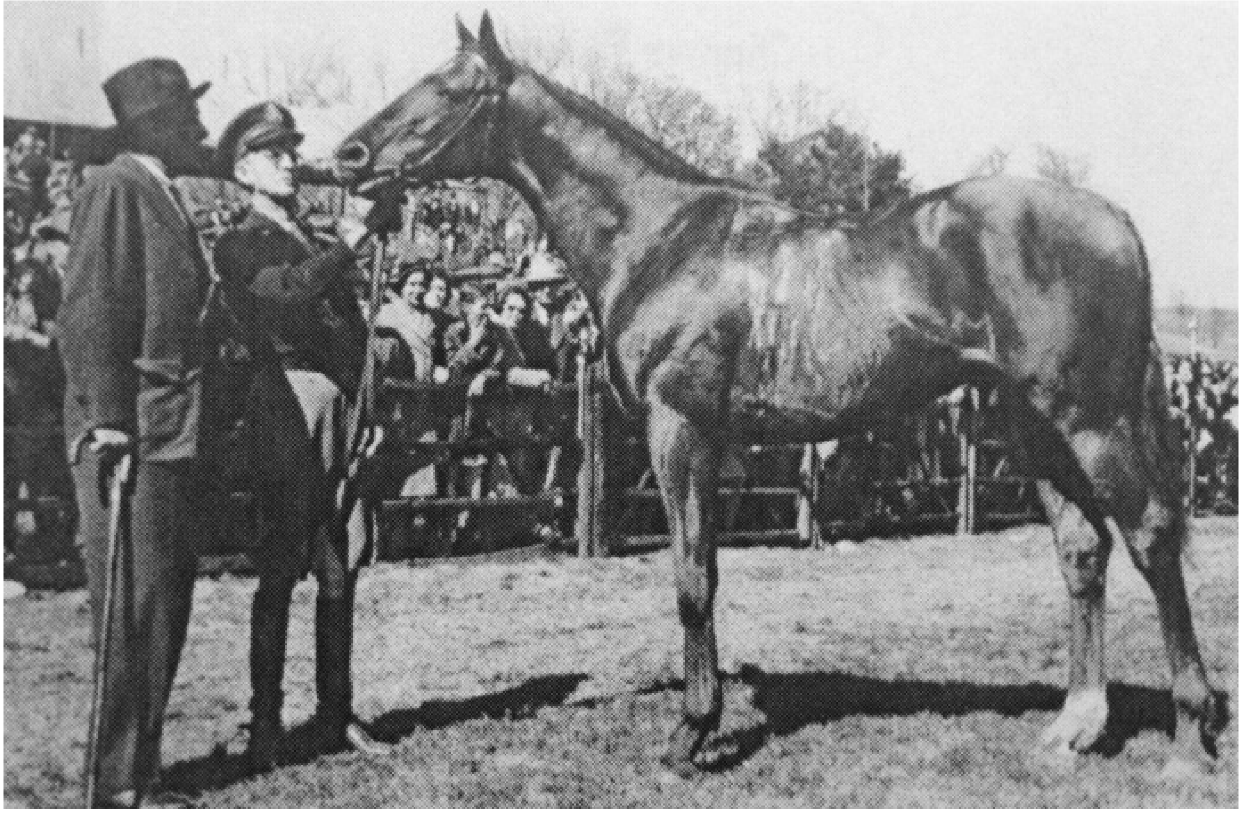
The thoroughbreds were divided between Robinson, Nebraska and Front Royal, Virginia. The half-breeds were despatched to Fort Reno, Oklahoma, and the Lipizzaners and Arabs to Pomona, California. The army then secured another 300 animals, infusing the US equine bloodlines with the finest European stock. Although many questioned the legality of looting European horses under international law, the US State Department ruled that, if the horses were properly appraised and entered into the official records as inter-Allied reparations, then legal title would be settled on the new American owners, in a ruling similar to the law passed by the Russian Duma in 2000, which in Russian eyes legalised their art trophies also taken in 1945.

Restitution efforts continued on an unprecedented scale. The Jews had suffered more than any other race at the hands of the Nazis, not in overall numbers, as the Russians lost more, but in systematic loss of life and property. Most sacred objects and books from Jewish synagogues and museums had been stolen or destroyed by the Nazis from the mid 1930s. From 1939 to 1945 all Jewish-related literature was confiscated from private and public libraries, often in connection with sending Jewish people off to concentration camps.

The Americans developed the Offenbach Archival Depot purely to cater for Jewish-related material. In a warehouse at Offenbach, the Americans attempted to reassemble the artistic heritage of the Jewish people and find homes for 2,859,418 books. In Frankfurt, US forces discovered 77,000 Hebrew and Yiddish publications, including the libraries of the Fraenkel Rabbi Seminary in Breslau and the Jewish congregation of Berlin. These items were shipped straight to the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

In September 1946, the US Department of State issued regulation WX-81072 that stated that objects removed from Jews or Jewish organisations in formerly occupied countries should be returned to their country of origin. Many displaced Jews had emigrated to Palestine and had entered Palestine in violation of the British mandate. Israel was not to become a country until 14th May 1949 and the US honoured the English request not to transfer any material to Palestine. However, in 1947, five cases containing items from Russian museums and Italian and Austrian citizens were mistakenly despatched to Jerusalem. The US Army sent ‘Top Secret’ communiqués to the British General Council in Jerusalem for the items' return but the boxes remained in Jerusalem.

European countries sent Jewish delegations to Offenbach, where they tried to identify and claim what had come from their country and citizens. After the establishment of Israel, the remaining inventory of the Offenbach archival depot was sent to Jerusalem and placed in the custody of Dr I. Joel, acting Librarian for the Hebrew University. On 15th February 1949, an agreement was signed between the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization (JRSO), a New York-based agency acting as Trustee for the Jewish people, and the United States military that the JRSO would try to locate and return this material to the legitimate owners within 2 years. The rightful owner would be required to pay shipping expenses and insurance for the items retrieval. Any property that wasn't allocated within 2 years would be maintained for the heritage of Jewish people. Objects of precious metal were to be retained and not melted down into bullion. Shortly after the last shipment to Israel in June 1949, the Offenbach depot was closed down.



Nordlicht, 'The finest horse in Europe'.

The third major depot established by the US army to gather, record and restitute Nazi plunder was the Munich collection point, started by two naval officers, Lieutenants Craig Smyth and J. Hamilton Coulter on 4th June 1945. The Allies found 1050 repositories of art in Germany and Austria, and the Munich collection point soon became the most important destination for recovered art. The Führerbau, Hitler's own store for his intended art museum at Linz, and the Verwaltungsbau, both located on the Konigsplatz, were renamed by the Americans, Gallery I and Gallery II. All Nazi names were removed from buildings, places, parks, memorials, streets and shrines.

All items brought to Munich were identified and photographed before being returned to their country of origin, if this could be established. Of all the collecting points, the records kept at Munich were the most detailed and the archive is today kept in the Photographic Archives of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, split between two repositories. The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) retains the original textual records (including the original inventory card file of all artworks that passed through Munich), a set of photographs and the negatives of all artworks. It offers a service providing images from the collection. The National Gallery of Art's Photographic Archive holds a microfilm of the front faces of the inventory cards and a second set of the photographs printed from the Munich negatives, available for study by appointment.

Smyth and Coulter initially had to make the buildings safe and German prisoners of war removed considerable ammunition and hand grenades. A large file containing a complete membership list of the Nazi party proved useful in tracking down the leadership as war criminals. A nearby electrical powerhouse was refitted as a canteen to feed the German workers, because a directive from Eisenhower forbade all Americans from any social contact with Germans of any age or sex. The order led to several jokes including, 'copulation without conversation is not fraternization.' Segregated black US Army truck drivers, who moved the art objects around, were housed and fed in the same building as the Germans.

Large shipments were returned to the Netherlands, France and Belgium. Once the acquiring country had signed a receipt, which then released the items, the responsibilities of the USA ceased. Problems of individual ownership were left to the country in question after signature, a responsibility that France failed to honour.

As with the pictures looted by the USA from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, the USA also took a considerable quantity of artworks from the Munich collection point. The *Weltkriegsbücherei* (German World War

Library), a private collection of volumes relating to World War I, was discovered by the MFAA men at the Kochendorf Salt Mine in April 1946. The 80,000-book library had been formed in 1915 for historical research on the causes, events and consequences of WWI to safeguard against such a catastrophe recurring. The library was shipped to Washington where it was given to the Library of Congress, joining the libraries of Hitler and Friedrich Rehse. The Germans resented the loss of the library and in 1947 *Weltkriegsbucherei* officials wrote several letters to the MFAA officer in charge, Captain Edith Standen, who in turn wrote to her superior officer, Major K. Burn.

Standen's letter clearly indicates her disapproval of the removal of the library:

> It seems to me a great injustice has been done, and as I am spending a few days in Washington, I thought I would find out the present status of the library and the project for returning it. I got in touch with the Library of Congress and they showed me the list of the material brought from Germany. The Weltkriegsbucherei, with others, is noted as 'packed for return' like the patent library.[18]

Major Burn does not appear to have been sympathetic, became an employee at the Library of Congress after the War, and the library was never returned.

Sometimes the Munich collection point officials shipped items directly back to their country of origin and bypassed Munich. At Neuschwanstein castle, the eccentric fairytale construction of King Ludwig II and resting place of much of the material confiscated by Rosenberg's ERR from Jewish collections in Paris, much of the material had never been unpacked. The crates had the ERR inventories stencilled on their sides with the travel information from Paris, where they had originated and the supervising officer, Major Edward E. Adams, working with the Munich MFAA men, sent the crates, which filled 41 freight cars, directly to Paris. They were unpacked at the Jeu de Paume Museum and the museum put masterpieces by Boucher, Fragonard and Regnault's The Three Graces on display. The Munich collection point was shut down in 1951, having completed its work.

Eisenhower ordered that looting by US military personnel was an offence and US authorities investigated and tracked down looted items in Germany and back in the USA. Taking 'souvenirs' was also illegal because of the fine line between a 'souvenir' and an artwork and to avoid allowing soldiers to say that a stolen artwork was a ‘souvenir.’ In practice, the taking of souvenirs was hard to police and, if the objects were minor and the soldiers discreet, incidents were generally overlooked.

However, more serious looting did occur. In the transfer of the gold and currency from the Merkers mine to the Reichsbank in Frankfurt, US$12,470 disappeared, along with a large number of gold coins and 468,800 Reich marks (US$46,880). The European Civil Affairs Currency Section investigated, but the stolen coins and currency were never recovered.

Often soldiers arrived at depositories before the MFAA men and the temptation to loot was considerable. In Munich, soldiers ransacked the Führerbau and Verwaltungsbau before they were properly secured and turned into the Munich collection point. Soldiers found silverware tooled with the initials A.H. and removed sets of spoons, knives and forks. From 1st May to 10th June 1945, when the buildings were turned over to the military police, units of engineers and infantry rifled through the waterlogged basement of the Führerbau and the piles of papers and documents. An unidentified sergeant found a box containing some of Hitler’s personal belongings, including his gold-plated pistol, his swastika ring, a tiny oil painting of his mother, a framed photo of his favourite Alsatian, Blondi, and numerous pieces of initialled silverware. Most of these items turned up in a private collection in 1981 and the pistol was donated to the West Point Museum. The military police cordoned off the buildings with barbed wire and sentries, but soldiers had already taken large quantities of linen, towels, porcelain, flags, memorabilia, telephones and lights.

Hermann Goering’s medals, revolver, baton and dagger were later donated to the West Point Museum. In May 1945, during his interrogation by Major Paul Kubala, Goering revealed that despite sending his enormous art collection to Berchtesgaden, he had kept a painting worth US$400,000 (1945 value). The Memling of the Madonna and Child measured 10×6 inches and is a useful case study on the lengths to which the US authorities went to secure individually looted artworks. Goering said that if he was allowed to collect some clothes, he would hand the painting over to the authorities. Kubala sent an officer with Goering’s valet to Fischhorn Castle with a letter signed by the Reichsmarschall to his wife telling her to hand over the painting. On 16th May, the officer and valet appeared with the Memling. Kubala showed the painting to his superior officer, Colonel Quinn, and they took it to General Patch’s office. The general wasn’t in so they left the painting on his desk. The Memling vanished and has never been seen again.

In August 1947, Herbert Steward Leonard, of the MFAA in Munich, wrote to the restitution branch in Germany that Major Kubala should be questioned as he was the last recorded person to have the painting definitely in his possession. Kubala was in the process of transferring from Germany back to the United States. The Criminal Investigation Division (CID) arranged for his entire luggage to be searched by the New York Port Authorities. When the items arrived on 27th September 1947, the customs officials noticed that the luggage had been previously searched. Had Kubala been tipped off and instructed someone to remove the painting or had the luggage been anonymously looted?

On 17th November, Kubala was interrogated by the CID and declined to answer many questions saying, ‘Sir, I don’t know whether I am really free to tell you. I was an agent - top security man - and I don’t know whether I am allowed to divulge this information or not.’[19] He said he had given the Memling to a MFAA officer in the presence of Colonel Quinn and that he had a receipt for it. He failed to find the receipt and advised the CID they should question Colonel Quinn. The CID investigator wrote, ‘Kubala is an individual whose character of integrity is sometimes questionable in that he appears to entertain illusions of grandeur and is prone to exaggerate his experiences and accomplishments, particularly those occurring during the hostilities period during the last war.’[20]

In September the CID had opened Kubala’s safe and locked desk and reviewed his personal and official papers. They concluded he had been ‘in difficulties’ on several occasions and, after the 17th November questioning, brought the following charges against him: - that he wrongfully cursed, beat and had sex with female prisoners, wrongfully cohabitated with a woman not his wife openly and in view of the members of his command (he later married the woman, Odile, and in the following January she gave birth to their child) and stole 15 gold watches from one of Goering’s aides, two valuable cigarette cases from one of Hitler’s cronies called Wilhelm Ohnesorge and 87,800 Reich marks (US$8,780 at 1945 value).

Friends in high places saved Kubala from court martial. Colonel Quinn wrote to General Geoffrey Keys, commanding officer of the Seventh Army, on 3rd November 1945, ‘Undoubtedly the charges are true; however ... as you probably guess, I have a warm spot in my heart for Kubala.’[21] Keys, in turn, wrote a memorandum authorising punishment under the 104th Article of War, if Kubala agreed to accept that, rather than undergo a trial by court martial, which he did. When Quinn was questioned about the Memling he said that Kubala was not responsible for its disappearance and that it had been signed over to the MFAA man, James Rorimer, who was by now curator of the Cloisters at the Metropolitan Museum. Rorimer gave the CID a statement acknowledging he had taken receipt of the painting from Quinn and that on 19th May he had travelled to Berchtesgaden and given the Memling to Major John (Jack) H. Smith of the 101 Airborne Division. Rorimer had obtained a receipt from Smith's deputy, Captain Harry Anderson, and produced it with a photograph of both Smith and Anderson holding the painting.

Thus, Rorimer, Quinn and Kubala kept to the same story. The CID agents went looking for Jack Smith and started in Detroit where he had worked for the *Detroit Times* before entering military service in 1942. In 1947, at the end of his military service, Smith had worked again for the *Detroit Times* before moving to Washington, DC where he took a job with *International News Photos*. On 5th March 1948, the CID caught up with him and he was interviewed by Chief Warrant Officer Jason Benjamin, who wrote, 'An interview with John Jack H. Smith revealed that some time during May, 1945, he received from Colonel William Quinn a painting that was to be photographed. After photographing, he returned it to Colonel Quinn. Smith added that the negative of the painting photo was sent to the Army Signal Corps Library in Washington.'[22]

Cover of the 9th century *Quedlinburg* or *Samuhel Gospels*, created in the early 13th century of gilt silver, enamel and encrusted with jewels. Inset relief depicts the Virgin and Child enthroned above two bishops.

A thorough search failed to produce the Memling photograph and Smith’s statement contradicted the story produced by the other three. Smith and Anderson had been discharged from the army and were no longer under military jurisdiction. The results of the investigation were sent to the CID office in the European Command and to the originator of the investigation, Herbert S. Leonard. Leonard was swamped with restitution and looting problems and with the inconclusive nature of the report he dropped the case and it was closed on 24th March 1948.

A similar incident happened at Schwarzenberg Castle near Weimar, which was occupied by Company F, 406th Infantry Regiment, and contained the contents of the Thuringia State Museum in Weimar. When Dr Walther Scheidig, Director of the Thuringia State Museum, visited the castle on 12th June 1945, he found the basement depository had been broken into and it was clear the intruders had been American from the footprints of the rubber soles and the American cigarette butts lying around. Scheidig reported the loss of the two paintings by Dürer, Venus and Cupid by Lucas Cranach and 11 other valuable artworks to the Company Commander, Captain Paul N. Estes.

The Holy Hungarian Crown, also called Stephan's Crown

In 1954, the army interviewed Estes in his home in Miami, Florida and the other soldiers who had been there. After a 10-month inconclusive investigation, the case was closed. In 1966, the two small paintings by Dürer turned up in the collection of a New York lawyer called Edward I. Elcofon, who claimed he had bought them off a soldier for US$500. The two Dürers, portraits of *Hans and Felicitas Tucher*, were once owned by the Grand Duchess of Sachsen-Weimar, and the federal Republic of Germany filed a suit against Elcofon in the name of the Grand Duchess. After 20 years of litigation, Elcofon was forced to turn the paintings over to the Department of State. In 1979, the same 102nd Division's officers who had been questioned by the authorities in 1954 were required again to give sworn affidavits to the United States District Court of New York but they all stuck to their story and no charges were brought. The two Dürers were finally sent back to the Thuringia State Museum in 1982.

Another high-profile return of precious objects was the Royal National Treasures of the Hungarian Crown, including the holy crown, sceptre, orb and sword, which were returned to Hungary by the Carter administration. An earlier State Department statement of 1951 had claimed that the USA did not consider the items spoils of war, but items that they had rescued. The Hungarians had hidden the treasures in November 1944 as the Russian armoured divisions began encircling Budapest. Colonel Ernö Pajtas, commander of the Royal Hungarian Guards, removed the holy crown and other coronation regalia from the Armour Room in the Royal Castle and buried it near Mattsee in Austria. In May 1945, he dug it up and handed it over to Major Paul Kubala at the US Seventh Army Interrogation Centre.

The crown, the most important artefact in Hungary, was crafted in 1074 by Emperor Michael Dukas of Constantinople (1061-1108) and given as a gift to the Hungarian King, Geza I. The other items were of similar importance and their removal was sanctioned by President Harry Truman. They remained in the USA until, after countless requests, they were returned in 1978.

The mystery of what happened to the Quedlinburg Church Treasure was endlessly debated by curators and art historians until on 14th June 1990, the New York Times ran a front-page article by William H. Honan entitled, ‘A Trove of Medieval Art Turns Up’. Joe Tom Meador was born in 1916 in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. He was commissioned a second lieutenant and joined the 87th Armoured Field Artillery on 28th August 1942, entering France 3 days after D-day. As he advanced as a forward observer directing artillery fire, he conducted a one-man looting campaign stealing altarpieces and rare treasures and cutting canvasses out of their frames with a hunting knife.

HERMANN GOERING'S
ART COLLECTION
AIRBORNE
THROUGH THE
COURTESY OF
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

The entrance to the former Luftwaffe headquarters at Konigsee where Hermann Goering's loot had been put out on display by the soldiers of the American 101st Airborne Division. The collection included priceless artworks and ornaments and was found hidden in a cave in the area.

On 19th April 1945, the 87th Field Artillery captured Quedlinburg and the mine, which had been used to store the famous treasures of the Quedlinburg Church that included the Reliquary of Henry I and other Byzantine and Roman artefacts. Meador stole a rich haul of medieval and Gothic decorated bibles, reliquaries and rock crystal items. After the war he returned to Biarritz to work as a drawing instructor where he was arrested for stealing items in the house in which he was billeted. After a 1-day trial he was found guilty and discharged from the army with a US$600 fine. The judge commentated, 'In view of the serious nature of your offense, the sentence imposed on you was thoroughly inadequate.'[23]

On his return to the USA, Meador ran a hardware store during the week and travelled to Dallas at weekends where he kept a flat and trawled gay nightclubs. His apartment was decorated with the treasures from the Quedlinburg Church and other artefacts stolen during the war. The cache was not discovered until after his death from cancer on 1st February 1980.

Meador left his estate to his brother Jack, and his sister, Jean, and, after they realised what they had been left, they placed the tenth-century Evangelistic Samuels on the market for US$9,000,000 in 1988. It was acquired in a covert deal by Herbert Tenschert, a Bavarian art dealer, for US$3,000,000, who sold it on to a German Foundation in April 1990.

Shortly afterwards, Willi Korte, a German freelance expert in stolen art hired the Washington-Dallas law firm of Andrew & Kurth to represent the claim of the 450-member Quedlinburg Church against the Meadors. The treasures were moved from a bank vault to the Dallas Museum of Art for safekeeping. After legal negotiations, Jack and his sister turned the remaining treasures over to German officials in an out-of-court settlement of US$2,750,000.

On early 1992 the Dallas Museum of Art displayed the artefacts (with no mention of their recent looted past), before they were returned to Quedlinburg Church on 7th March 1992. Although the most valuable pieces of the collection were returned, various items such as the tenth-century rock crystal relic and the gold and silver crucifixes of the twelfth century are still outstanding.

Goering Art Collection. Konigsbee, Germany. U.S. soldier sits with rifle across his knees and keeps watch over one of the famous paintings found among the loot stored in a cave near Berchtesgaden by Hermann Goering. This masterpiece was stolen from the Wildenstein Collection.

Another major American theft was that of the Hesse Crown Jewels stolen from Kronberg castle by Major David Watson, Captain Kathleen Nash and Colonel Jack Durant. Kronberg castle had been built 9 miles north-east of Frankfurt by the Hesse family in the time of Queen Victoria. The Hesse family ruled over the Province of Hesse from medieval times until 1918. The province had a population of 4.5 million and covered an area of 8000 square miles. The Hesse jewellery collection was amongst the most famous in Europe and had been purchased or inherited from the Italian, Greek and English Royal families. It contained a large assortment of gold, platinum and silver jewellery and some of the most famous diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires in Europe.

Philipp von Hesse, the then head of the Hesse family, had married Princess Mafalda, second daughter of Victor Emmanuel III of Italy and operated successfully as an art dealer for a while, sourcing paintings in Italy for Hitler's Führermuseum. He ended up in Dachau, which he survived. His wife was sent to Buchenwald, where she was forced into prostitution, used as a human shield and died after having her arm blown off by Allied bombing.

After the war, Kronberg castle was requisitioned by the US army as a country club for its officers. In November 1945, Captain Kathleen Nash and her staff were exploring the castle when they found a fresh patch of concrete in the cellar. They began chipping away at the concrete with a hammer and chisel and found a zinc-lined chamber, which in turn revealed a wooden box in which were hidden the Hesse crown jewels worth many millions of dollars.

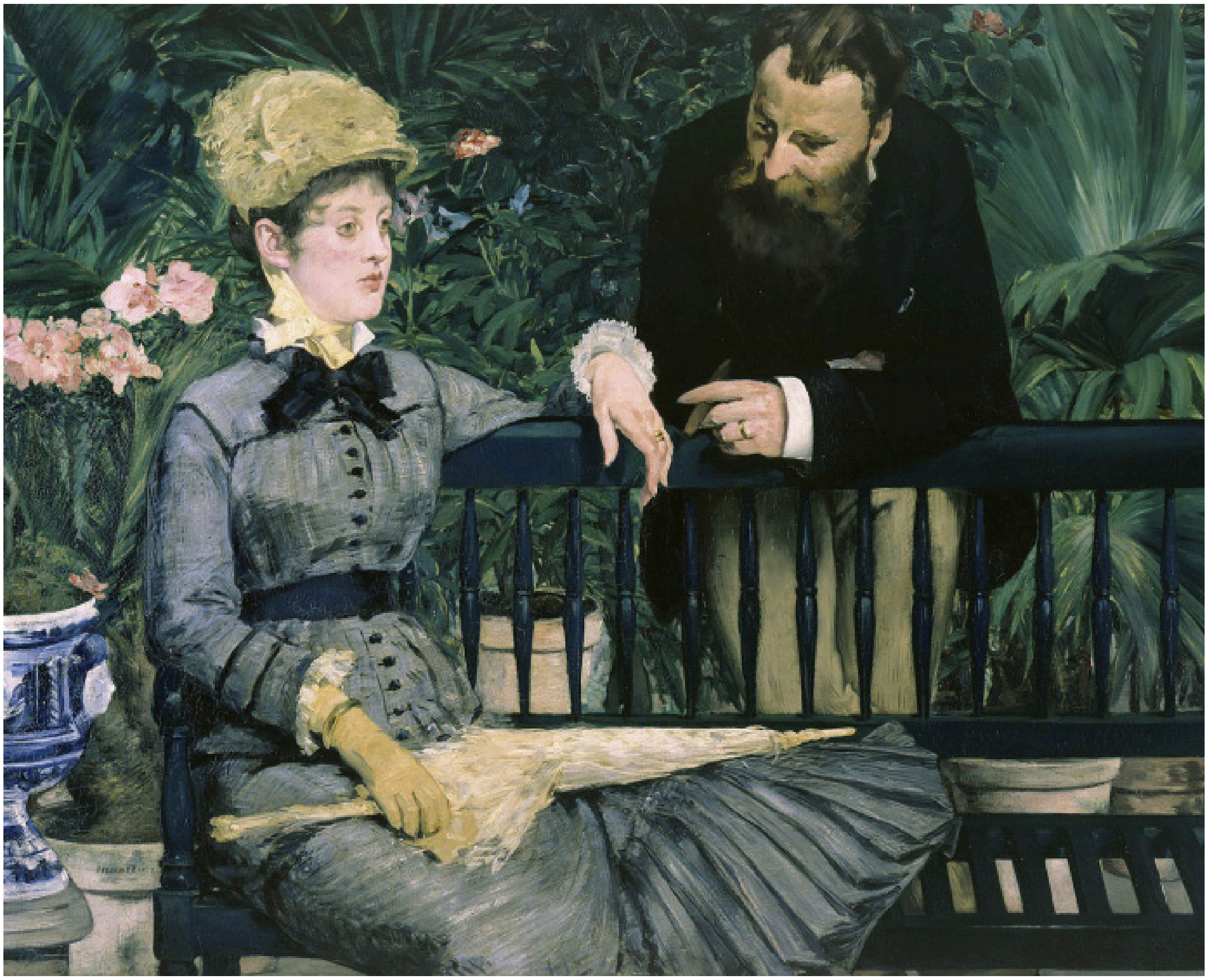
Soldiers examine, *Madame Manet in the Conservatory* by Edouard Manet, found in a collection of Reichsbank wealth, SS loot, and art treasures removed by the Nazis from Berlin to a salt mine at Merkers, Germany. The soldiers are members of the 90th division, U.S. Third army, which uncovered the loot.

Instead of turning in the jewels, Nash, Watson and Durant removed the stones from their settings before selling the settings in Switzerland. In late 1945 the three thieves returned with their booty to the USA, together with looted dishes, silverware and books. In January 1946 the Hesse family reported the theft to the US authorities and the Army's Criminal Intelligence Division arrested Watson, Durant and Nash. Half of the jewels were recovered at the home of Nash's sister. Others fell into the hands of organised crime in Chicago.

Durant married Nash so she could not testify against him, but he received 15 years, Nash 5 years and Watson 3 years. They claimed that 'souvenir' hunting in Germany had been widespread. Watson got out after only 4 months, probably because his family owned a large grocery store on the west coast and had contacts, but Nash and Durant served their full sentences before both dying of alcoholism.

When Nash was asked how much of the jewellery had been mailed to her sister's house, she replied, 'Why, I think probably about one half of it. I mean the small stuff.' A photograph shows the haul of the recovered 'small stuff' laid out on a table covered with a black tablecloth guarded by five military police. The display contained four handfuls of cut diamonds, and piles of rough-cut emeralds and pearls amidst countless diamond and ruby bracelets, diamond wristwatches and a flawless 12-carat diamond. The larger stones in the other half of the haul have never been recovered, will have been re-cut and are by now probably spread around the world in different collections.

When the Americans arrived at Berchtesgaden, the shattered buildings were still smoking from extensive British bombing. In 1933 Hitler had bought a home in the scenic Alpine village of Berchtesgaden, in the Obersalzberg Mountains, which he named the Berghof. It developed into a holiday complex for the Nazi high command complete with barracks and outbuildings for the SS Guards. Herman Goering's farmhouse was nearby.

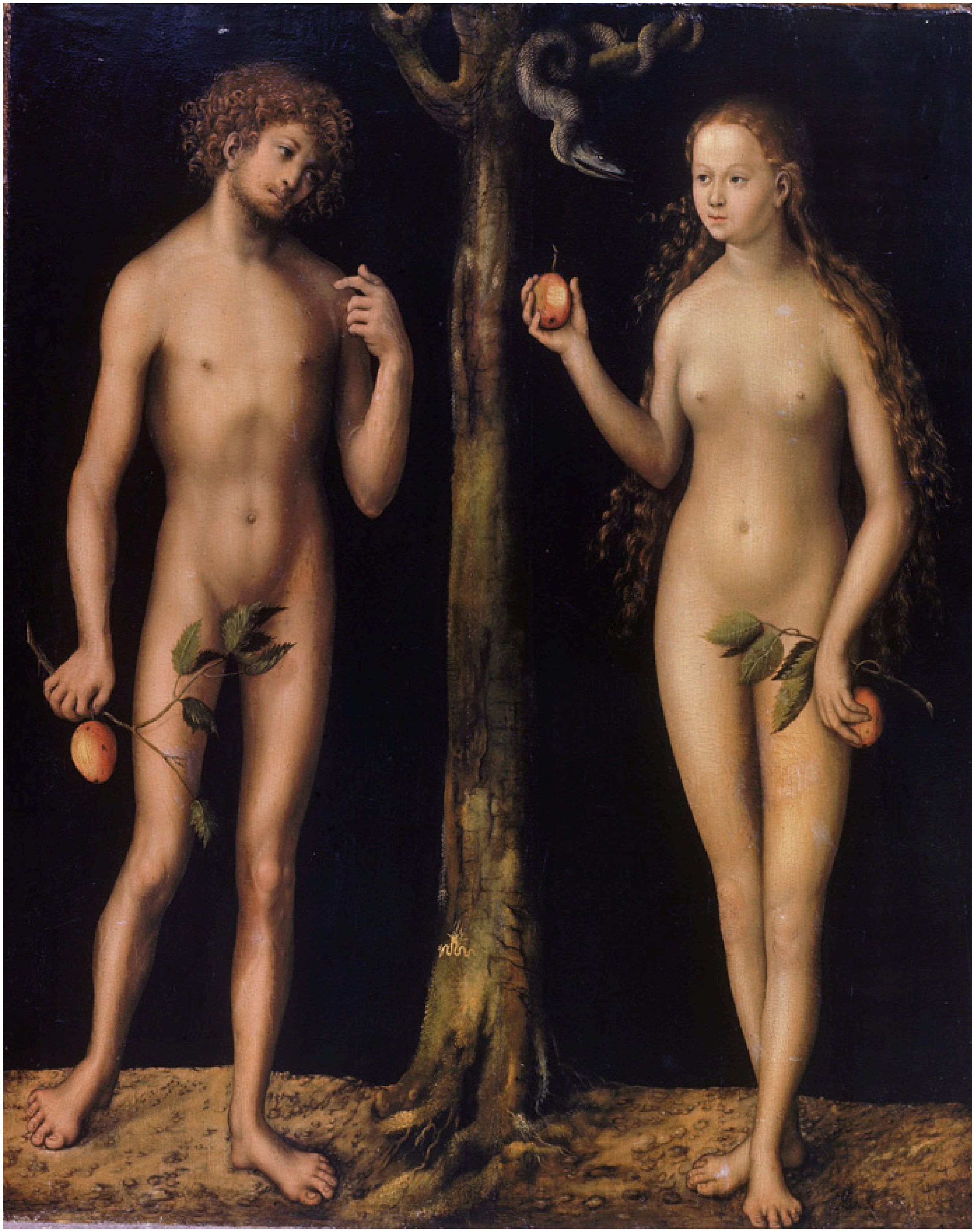


***Madame Manet in the Conservatory* (*c.* 1879) by Edouard Manet (1832-1882).**

Hundreds of pines lay around, fractured from the heavy concussion of the bombs. Streams that had had their courses diverted by the bombing trickled through the debris of trash, rubble, stone, bricks, books and paper. The locals and the soldiers raided the well-stocked cellars of their finest clarets, burgundies and Armagnacs. In the storerooms of the guest house they found enough dishes, silverware, porcelain, and canned and frozen foods for a siege lasting years. The French and American soldiers got as drunk as they could. Bottles lay scattered around and an infantry colonel arriving shortly afterwards commentated, 'It looks to me that they intended to defend this place with wine bottles.'[24] In addition to the wines, food and silverware, other items began to disappear at speed.

Newcomers arrived to scenes of bedlam. Moroccans in red fezzes carried away large portraits and French and American soldiers staggered around holding bottles. A Bechstein piano sat in the ruins of a banqueting hall with an American soldier playing ‘Deep in the Heart of Texas’. Smoke slowly rose from the burning embers of the charred remains of the buildings and the ground was covered in pieces of glass and debris.

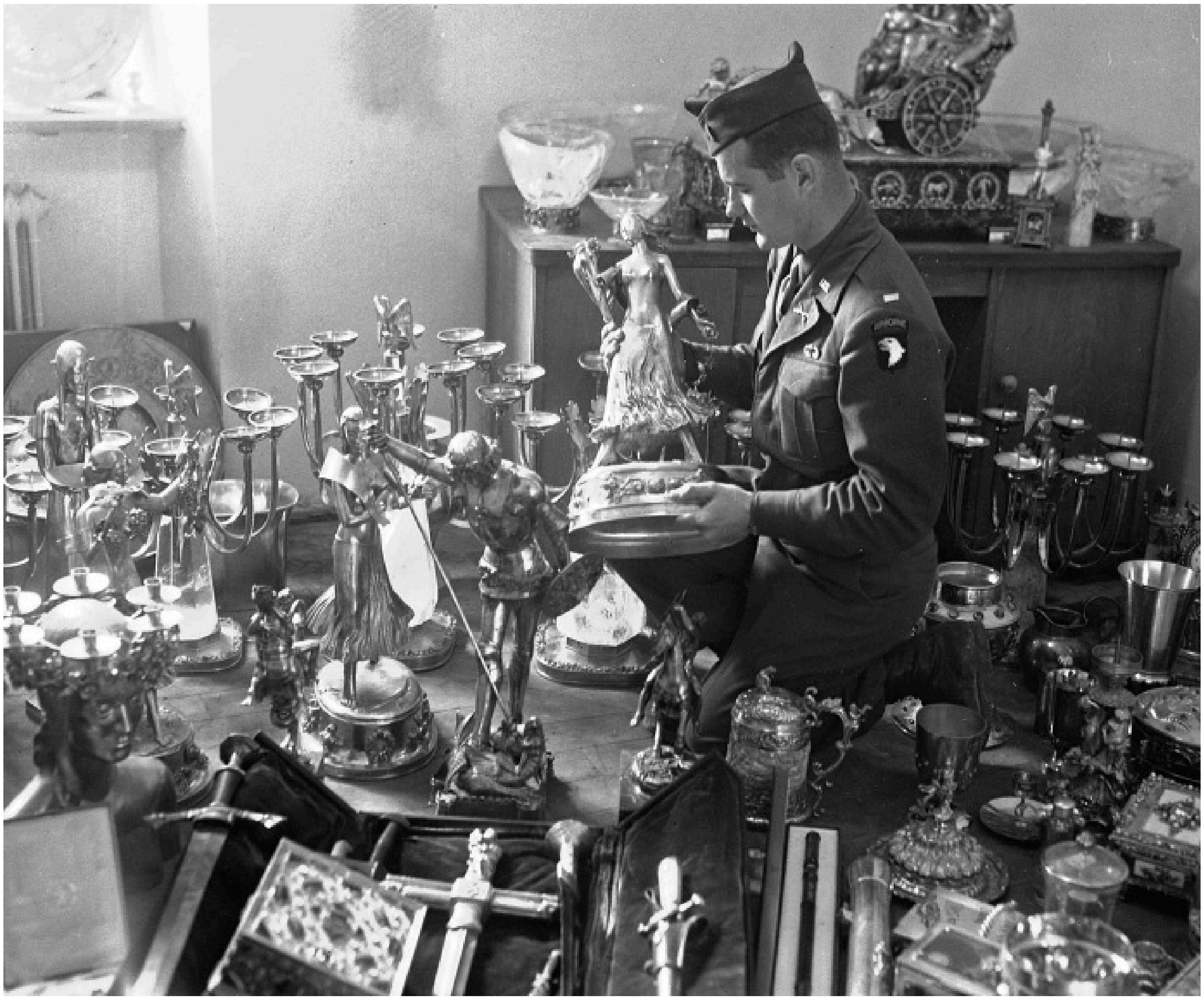
On 5th May 1945, Lieutenant Warren H. Ekberg and Lieutenant Colonel Willard White, members of the 129th Combat Engineers of the US Seventh Army, found many items on their treasure hunt around Berchtesgaden. Ekberg found a few of Hermann Goering’s belongings including 20 iron crosses and a silver baton covered with 20 miniature imperial eagles, and a silver chain with a gold medallion inset with diamonds and a swastika. Colonel Willard White removed 100 pieces of Hitler’s silverware, marked with the German eagle surmounting a swastika and the initials A.H., Hitler’s personal stationery, wool blankets, Dresden figurines, porcelain, German officer swords and china and crystal goblets that Goering had stolen from the palace of Louis Napoleon. White sent these items to his wife, the sister of the Congressman (and future President) Lyndon B. Johnson, and they entertained in great style after the War using all these objects.



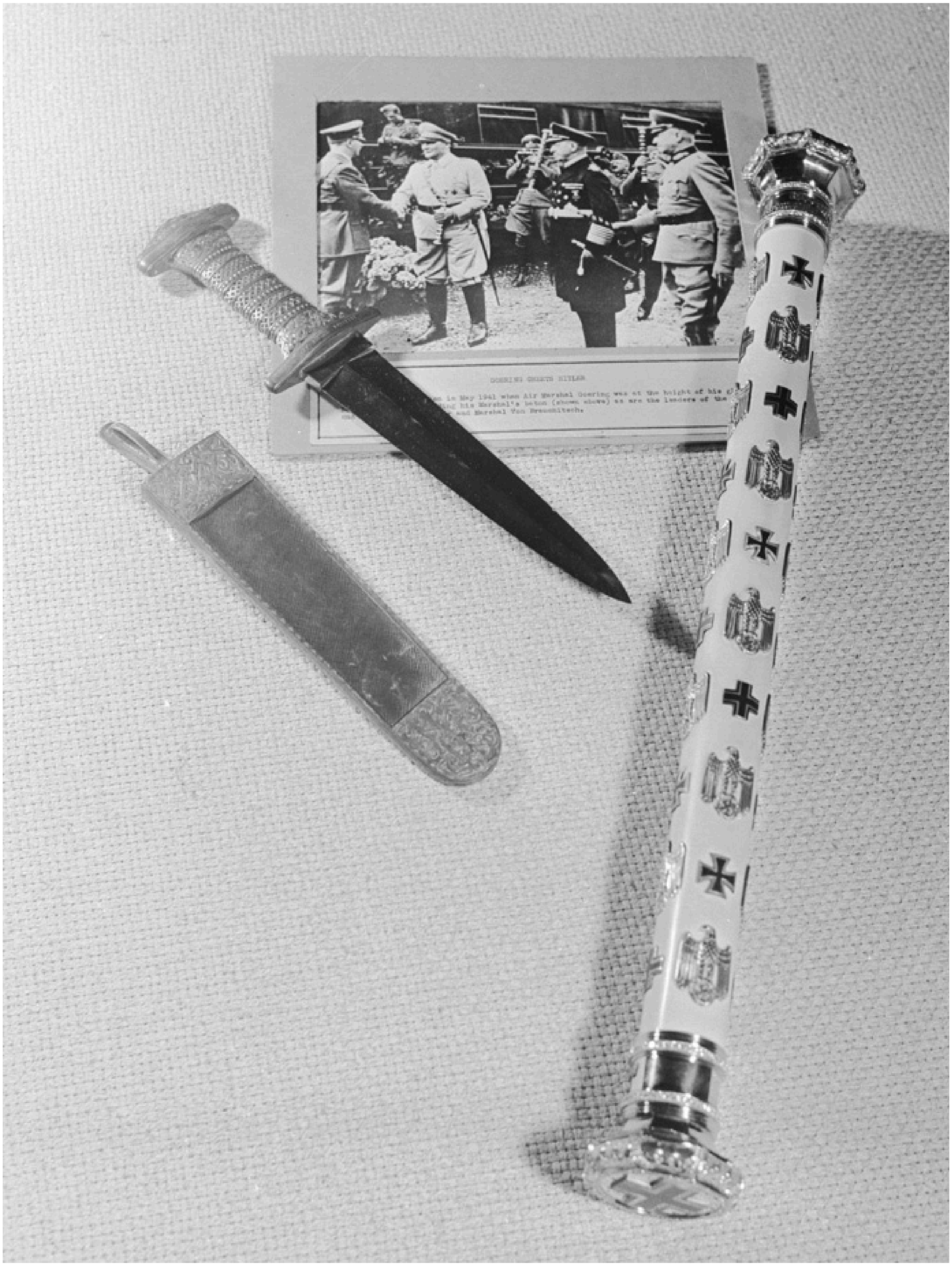
***Adam and Eve* (*c.* 1514), by Lucas Cranach the Elder. Found among Goering's looted art collection by US troops at Berchtesgaden in May 1945.**

John C. Porter was exploring Berchtesgaden when he came across Goering's house blown half across the patio and into the pool. Between two bodies floating in the water his eye caught sight of something glittering on the bottom of the pool. He removed his clothes, pushed the bodies out of the way, and dived to the bottom of the pool, recovering a French ceremonial Roman gladius-style sword crafted by Boutet, Napoleon's personal armoire. Porter kept the sword until he sold it to a private collector for an undisclosed sum in 1978.

Soldiers looted all the houses including the one Heinrich Himmler had built for his 32-year-old mistress, Hedwig Potthast. Martin Bormann's art and Heinrich Hoffmann's art collections were stolen and artefacts like Himmler's chandelier, desks and rugs were used to decorate Third Army headquarters. The most valuable pieces at Berchtesgaden were in the collection of Hermann Goering, partly stored in six freight cars and partly in an underground bunker. Unfortunately, French armoured divisions opened fire on three of the freight cars shredding paintings and sculptures with machine gun bullets. After the French had moved through, the local people raided the freight cars before the MFAA men could secure them. Four women fighting over an eighteenth-century rug agreed to cut it into four pieces. The locals shared out sugar, cigarettes, wines, coins, rugs, sculptures and paintings and then hid them, trying to stop the Americans from finding them.

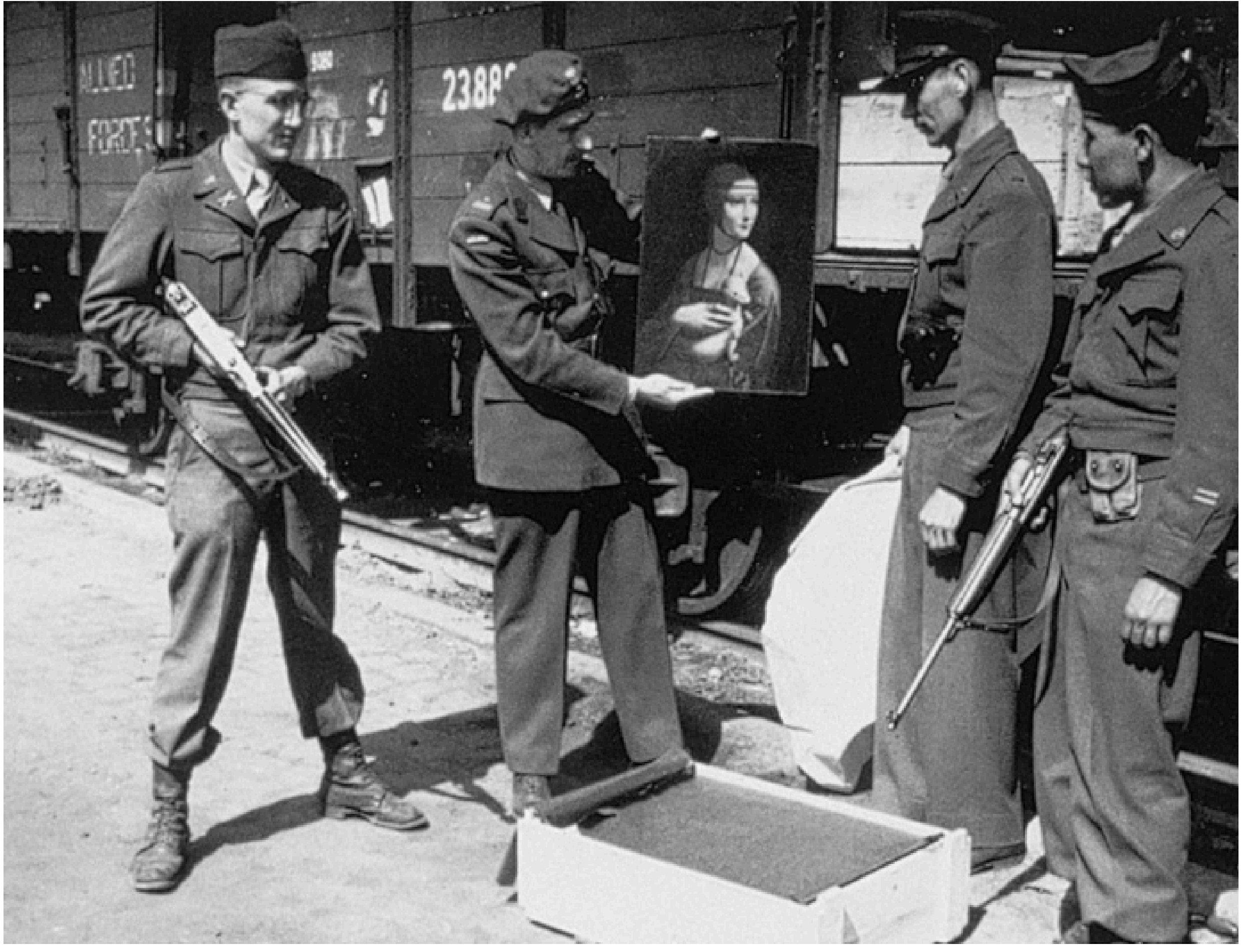


A U.S. soldier examines a solid gold statue, part of Goering’s private loot, found by the 7th U.S. Army in a mountainside cave near Schönau am Königssee, Germany, May 25, 1945. The secret cave, the second to be found, also contained stolen priceless paintings from all over Europe.


GOERING GREETS HITLER
in May 1941 when Air Marshal Goering was at the height of his
his Marshal's baton (shown above) as are the leaders of the
and Marshal Von Brauchitsch.

Goering's dagger and baton

It was Captain Harry V. Anderson who suspected that there might be more of Goering's collection stored in the Strabsent, the unfinished underground post. After three days they managed to chip through the 18 inches of concrete and break into the room stuffed with treasure that soon became nicknamed 'Aladdin's cave'. Before the Monuments Men could secure the bunker soldiers stole a silver-encased copy of *Mein Kampf* that was later sold to a private collector and Hermann Goering's guest book for Karinhall that contained the inscription in the cover, 'With most cordial wishes for happiness and bliss, Adolf Hitler, Berlin, April 10, 1935.' The book contains many distinguished signatures, including that of American President Herbert Hoover, and was later donated to the West Point Military Academy Museum by General Maxwell Taylor in 1948. Goering's paintings filled 40 rooms; other rooms were piled high with tapestries and boxes of objects, porcelain and silver and gold ware.



Troops with *Lady with an Ermine*. Cecilia Gallerani, mistress of Ludovico Sforzaby (1490), by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519).

Another of Goering's trains was found abandoned on a rail siding near Neuschwanstein. Bernard Taper, the MFAA man who was in charge of the

Wiesbaden collecting point at one stage, later said, ‘Probably the best artwork I helped recover was from Goering’s train.’[25] Taper was tasked with recovering items that had been stolen by the local population or famous items that had simply gone missing. He tracked down countless items in 1946 and 1947. The locals had originally looted the train looking for schnapps, and Taper successfully enlisted the help of the local police to help him recover the items. He established that some of the fine Gothic statues had been taken by a local cabinet maker called Roth. When caught, the man said he had seen the objects lying in the mud.

Taper tried to find the famous Raphael painting *Portrait of a Young Man* that had been looted by the Nazis from the Czartoryski Museum in Cracow in 1939. The painting had last been seen in the Cracow residence of the Nazi Governor of Poland, Hans Frank, who also had a Rembrandt and Leonardo’s *Lady with an Ermine* in ‘his’ collection, both of which were recovered. Frank and his entourage left Poland in a rush taking the three paintings with them to Bavaria. By the time Frank was captured in Neuhaus, the Raphael had disappeared. Taper spent many hours questioning the looter Kajetan Muhlmann and his successor Wilhelm Ernst von Palezieux who he found in the French occupied zone. Taper described how all the people he interviewed suffered from ‘selective amnesia’ and how much he regretted never finding the Raphael, which remains one of the most important paintings to disappear after WWII.

Despite the Americans removing the Nazi-style art, the thoroughbred horses, important libraries for the Library of Congress, several hundred paintings from the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, the ceremonial treasure of the kings of Hungary and various other treasures, and the pilfering of mementoes by the soldiers, they returned millions of books and thousands of artworks to both private owners and museums in the largest restitution exercise ever. Although the Russians stole everything in their zone down to the last nuts and bolts of complete factories and all the artworks they could find, and despite the clear beginnings of the cold war and the deteriorating relationship between the two countries, the Americans still handed over to them around 500,000 art objects that they found in depositories that had been stolen by the Nazis from Russian museums and private collections.

The sterling efforts of the tireless men of the MFAA were described by Bernard Taper, ‘It was a symbol that there were higher values than victory, higher values than patriotism. It was a kind of behaviour, which was a disinterested doing of good ... and amid all the sickening evidence of man's depravity and destructiveness.' It was good to, 'help preserve some of the things mankind had done that one could not only bear to contemplate but even take joy in.' Reflecting 60 years later, Taper said he could not understand the Nazi mentality, but he acknowledged that he could fathom it, 'Human beings are complicated, and I've read enough Shakespeare to know.'[26]

[1] Hamlin, Jesse, 'Bernard Taper - His Mission, to Save Art Looted by the Nazis', *San Francisco Chronicle,* 4/5/07, p. E-1.

[2] Woolley, Leonard, *Spadework, Adventures in Archaeology,* 1953.

[3] Alford, Kenneth D., *Nazi Plunder,* Da Capo Press, 2001, p. 7.

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 8.

[5] Bradsher, Greg, 'Nazi Gold: The Merkers Mine Treasure', *Quarterly of the National Archives and Records Administration,* Spring 1999, Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 9.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 10.

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 10.

[8] Alford, *op. cit.,* p. 11.

[9] *War and Cultural Property Conference,* National Arts Journalism Program, copy of letter belonging to Charles Parkhurst, former MFAA man, original letter - location unknown.

[10] Alford, *op. cit.,* p. 207.

[11] *Ibid.,* p. 208.

[12] *Ibid.,* p. 210.

[13] *Ibid.,* p. 213.

[14] Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Dawn of Day,* 1881, a collection of meditations and aphorisms on 575 different subjects.

[15] Alford, *op. cit.,* p. 176.

[16] *Ibid.,* p. 164.

[17] *Ibid.,* p. 165.

[18] *Ibid.,* p. 125.

[19] *Ibid.,* p. 58.

[20] *Ibid.,* p. 58.

[21] *Ibid.,* p. 59.

[22] *Ibid.,* p. 60.

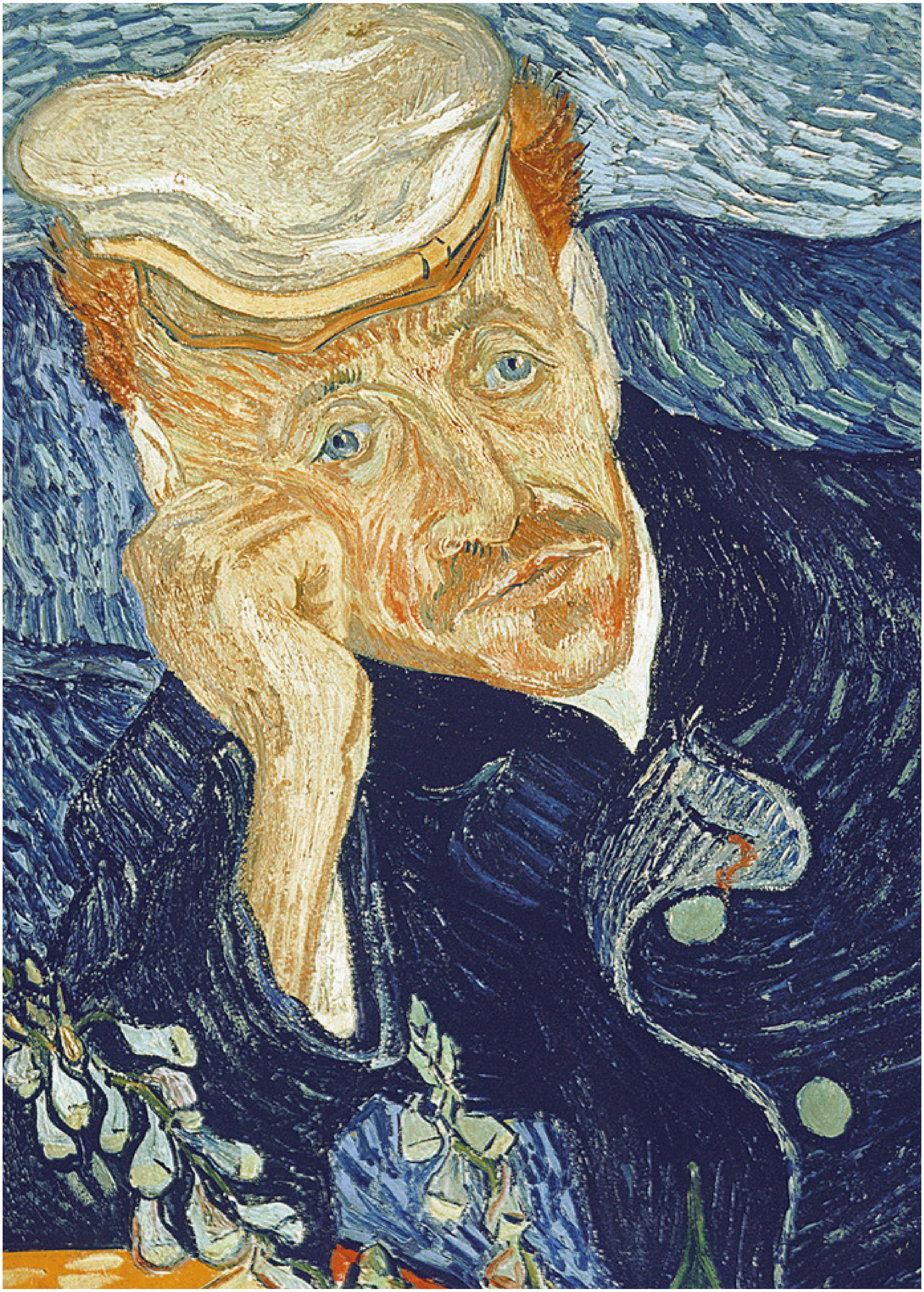
[23] *Ibid.,* p. 183.

[24] *Ibid.,* p. 61.

[25] Hamlin, *op. cit.,* p. 3.

[26] *Ibid.,* p. 4.

15 - 1945-2009



Detail from *Portrait of Dr Gachet* by Vincent Van Gogh.

> ‘The annual dollar value of art and cultural property theft is exceeded only by the trafficking in illicit narcotics and arms. The illegal trade of works of art and cultural property is as dangerous as these crimes. The criminal networks that traffic in the illicit sale of works of art and cultural property are often times the same circles that deal in illegal drugs, arms dealing, and other illegal transactions. It has also been found recently that many insurgents and terrorist groups fund their operations through the sales and trade of stolen works of art and cultural property.’
>
> - US National Central Bureau of Interpol

Since 1945, art theft has continued to accelerate from pre-war levels, although on a modest scale compared to the Soviet or Nazi looting in WWII. In the five years after WWII the US authorities worked hard to restitute artworks and books to their country of origin. By the early 1950s most of the restitution agencies had been closed down and the collection points shut. Shortly afterwards apathy towards stolen art descended on an art world exhausted and traumatised by the Nazi era. The sheer quantity of looted art circulating on the open market in the post-war years encouraged dealers and auction rooms to turn a blind eye and there is hardly a museum or private collection formed since WWII that does not contain items looted during WWII or that at least have a gap in their provenance from 1939-1944.

Interpol, the international police organisation founded in 1923, formed a dedicated art unit in 1947, but has struggled against apathy on behalf of its 167 member countries. On its website it says that it is difficult to gauge the extent of the trade in stolen art because, ‘The theft is very often not discovered until the stolen objects are found on the official art market and countries send very little information to Interpol and many do not keep statistics on this type of criminality.’ In an Interpol conference on stolen art held in Lyon, France from 5-7th October 1988, only 25 of the 167 member countries sent representation and Interpol lamented that only 20 of the 167 countries bother to use the art report form requested by Interpol (the Crigen art form) to report stolen artworks.

Interpol headquarters

Only 15% of stolen artworks are ever recovered. Many police forces make only token efforts towards recovering art. Socialist-leaning governments view private ownership of art as elitist and there is little voter support for devoting resources to recovering artworks. Police forces tend to try harder to recover artworks stolen from museums than they do from private houses. Despite the apathy shown towards recovery, Interpol works ceaselessly to co-ordinate the recovery of artworks. In 2006 they introduced a DVD/CD-ROM of all artworks listed as stolen on their database. The DVD contains over 30,000 items and is circulated to all police forces and auction rooms, and is available to the general public for a fee.

Interpol says that, despite the growing databases available on the internet making it harder for thieves to sell looted art at auction, ‘In Europe the figures [of art theft] are constantly going up and are evidence of criminals increasing their interest in works of art.’ Interpol’s motivation for providing the DVD was that Article 4(4) of the UNIDROIT Convention of June 1995 provides that:

> In determining whether the possessor exercised due diligence, regard shall be had to all the circumstances of the acquisition, including the character of the parties, the price paid, whether the possessor consulted any register of stolen cultural objects, and any other relevant information and documentation which it could reasonably have obtained, and whether the possessor consulted accessible agencies or took any other step that a reasonable person would have taken in the circumstances.

Interpol says the DVD is

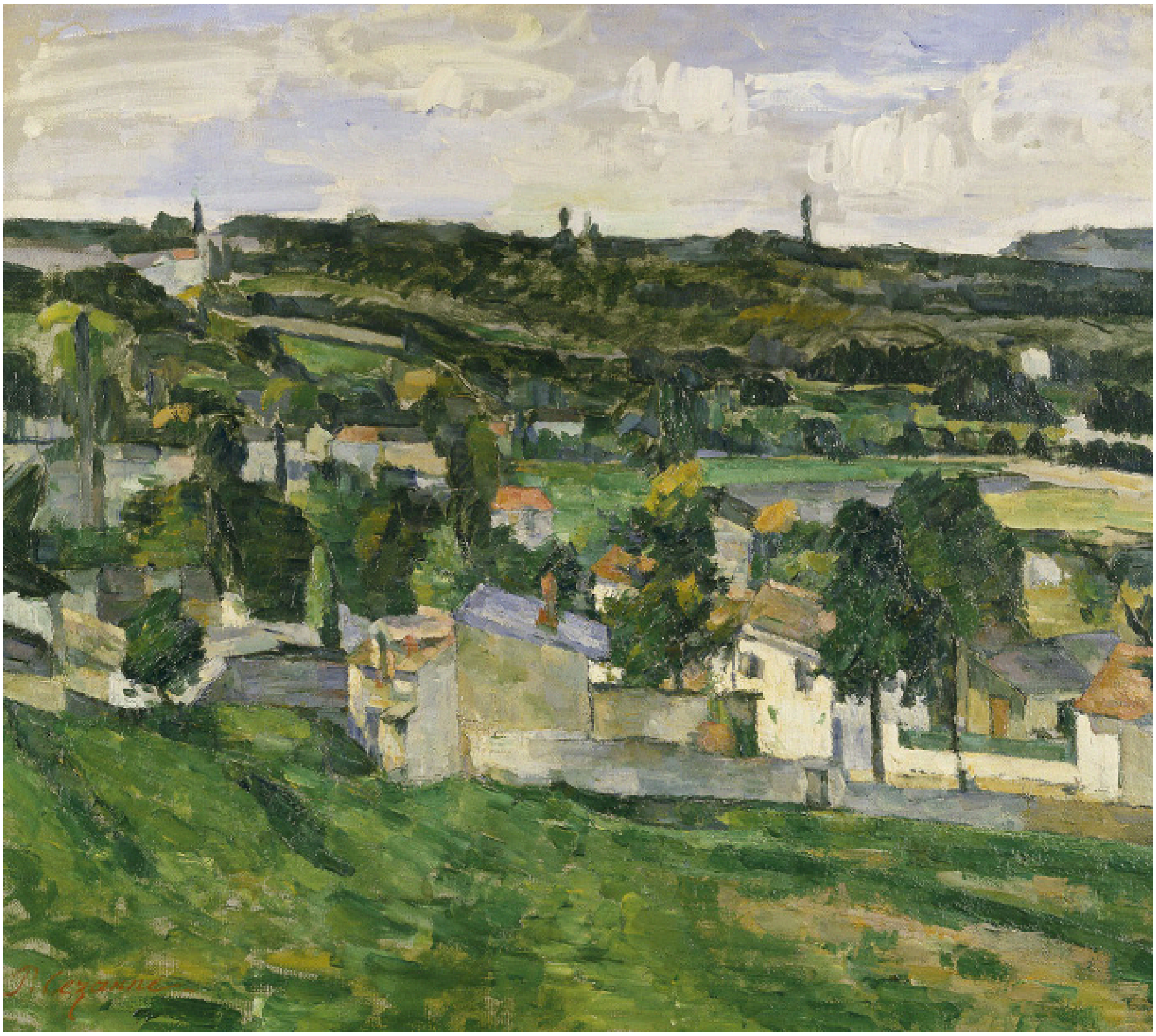
> Designed for police and customs services, museums, auction rooms, antique dealers, collectors and art lovers in general, and lists about 31,500 works of art and cultural property items such as paintings, sculptures and tapestries, with search possibilities based on different criteria ... By promoting its role in the field, Interpol wishes to assist in the fight against traffic in stolen works of art.

Interpol puts art theft as it its third priority after drugs and arms trading and estimates that between US$1.5 billion and US$6 billion is stolen annually. Put the best of these lost works in a single place and you would have what has been called the ‘Museum of the Missing.’

The largest database of stolen art, which collates Interpol's list and all the other lists of stolen art is the Art Loss Register (ALR), which was formed by Julian Radcliffe in 1990 and now contains over 180,000 stolen items. Using figures provided by the Art Loss Register, the Impressionist section of the 'Museum of the Missing' would have 167 Renoirs, 72 works by Degas, 54 Cézannes and 40 Monets. Amongst the old masters would be 209 Dürers, 180 Rembrandts, 135 by Rubens, and 106 Van Dycks. The twentieth-century section would include 569 Picassos, 182 Warhols and 14 Francis Bacons - on a par with any of the finest small museums in the world.

Director of Public Relations for the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Bill Bantey, is seen showing photos of the 18 paintings stolen. Three knowledgeable art thieves dropped through a skylight past a faulty alarm system and made off with $2 million worth of paintings and art objects.

Artwork that has gone missing from the world's collective heritage since the war is considerable and, Interpol says, the trend is gathering pace. With the increase in the value of artworks in the last 20 years, art theft has become endemic. The modern art boom has its roots in the sale of Jacob Goldschmidt, a banker from Berlin who escaped from the Nazis before the war. On 15th October 1958, at their New Bond St London headquarters, Sotheby's then chairman, Peter Wilson, a former MI5 officer and consummate salesman, printed the first catalogue with colour illustrations and conducted the first evening sale in black tie. Beginning to swing the balance of power away from the dealers and into the hands of the auction rooms, Wilson filled the auction rooms with celebrities, including Margot Fonteyn, Somerset Maugham, Kirk Douglas and Sir Winston Churchill, implying that some of the star quality of these people would rub off on the acquirers of the art. Paul Cézanne's *Le Garcon au Gilet* made US$610,000, more than five times the existing world-record price for a painting.



View of Auvers-sur-Oise **by Paul Cézanne (1839-1906)**

In 1958, Christie's and Sotheby's handled less than US$25 million of sales, but by 2007 this figure exceeded US$12 billion. The highest prices at auction have all been achieved since 1987 and include Rubens's Massacre of the Innocents bought by the late Lord Thomson of Fleet for US$76.7m on 10th July 2002; van Gogh's Irises bought by Alan Bond for US$49m on 11th November 1987; Renoir's Bal au Moulin de la Galette for US$78m on 17th May 1990 and van Gogh's Portrait of Dr Gachet on 15th May 1990 for US$82.5m. In recent years prices have climbed even higher with Picasso's and Munch's selling for over US$100m. Thieves read the newspapers too and see the enormous value in relatively small and easy-to-transport artworks.

Art became a currency and even attracted art funds in the 1990s. Art was seen as a new asset class that could be discussed in terms of yield and have a return like a bond or stock. Art is a good investment, but only for the rich collector who can sell at the right moment and from a position of strength. It does not work well in a fund because: - it is illiquid and cannot necessarily be sold at a specific moment to meet certain forecasts, it does not have an income stream and so banks do not like to lend against it or leverage it and an investor is speculating on the speed of capital appreciation. However, the art thief just read more and more reports about the escalating values of art and its investment potential. When art heists were reported, the value normally led the piece before the name of the artist or the artwork was even mentioned.

Post-war art thefts can be divided into the opportunistic theft such as by the desperate drug-taker who is not looking specifically for art, but removes it in the course of a robbery, and the rarer specialist thief looking for art or antiques. Despite the popularity of art theft, it is not a productive asset to steal and is described by Bobby Read, group fine art underwriter at Hiscox, Europe's leading fine art underwriter, as the, 'dumbest form of art crime' - difficult to sell because ransom demanders often get caught and the crime normally attracts a jail sentence. Most of Hiscox's art claims arise from when artworks are in transit. They also have to contend with the more sophisticated art crimes such as the use of inflated insurance valuations as collateral for dodgy loans, fakes and forged paintings, smuggling without correct documentation, defective title on looted or stolen artworks, and modern reproduction of 'old' furniture.

OSTON POLICE SPECIAL OPERATIONS DO NOT CROSS
BOSTON POLICE

A security guard stands outside the Dutch Room of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the site where robbers stole treasured art objects in an early morning robbery

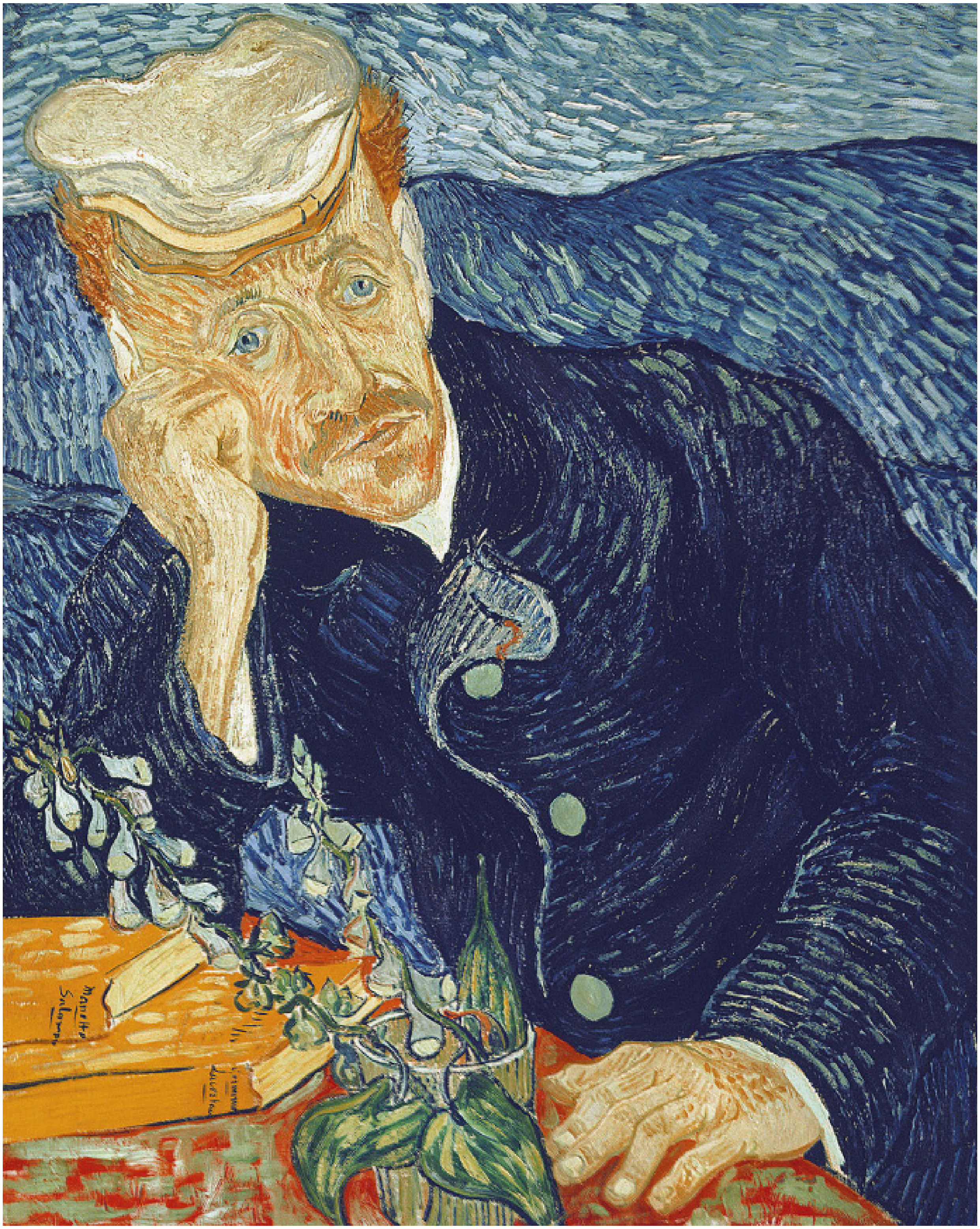
(March 21, 1990).

Peter Wilson Chairman of Sotheby's on the rostrum.

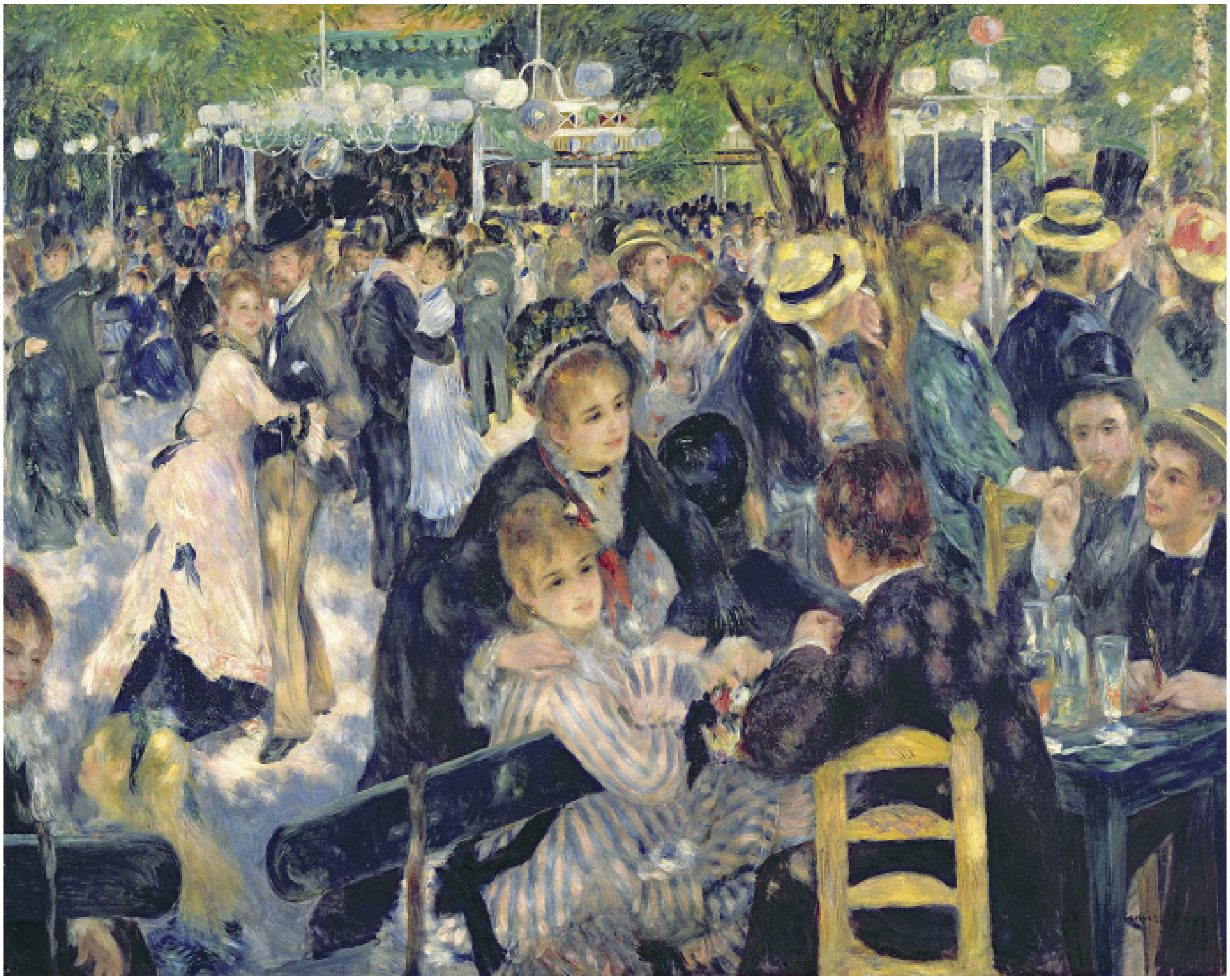
Although most artworks are stolen from private houses, thefts from museums have been the most productive for art thieves. On 4th September 1972, The Montreal Museum of Art suffered the largest art theft in Canadian history when armed thieves stole 18 paintings along with jewellery and figurines. The paintings included works by Delacroix, Gainsborough and a rare Rembrandt landscape. In 2003 the *Montreal Globe and Mail* estimated the Rembrandt would be worth US$20m on the open market. These paintings have never been recovered.

A couple of months later, on 12th November 1972, thieves removed nine Impressionists from the Musée de Bagnols-sur-Céze in Gard, France. The paintings included Matisse's *View of St Tropez* of 1904, Renoir's *Portrait of Madame Albert André* and *Roses in a Vase* and *Jeunes Femmes à la Campagne* and works by Bonnard, Boudin, Dufy, Vuillard and Marquet. These paintings are still missing.

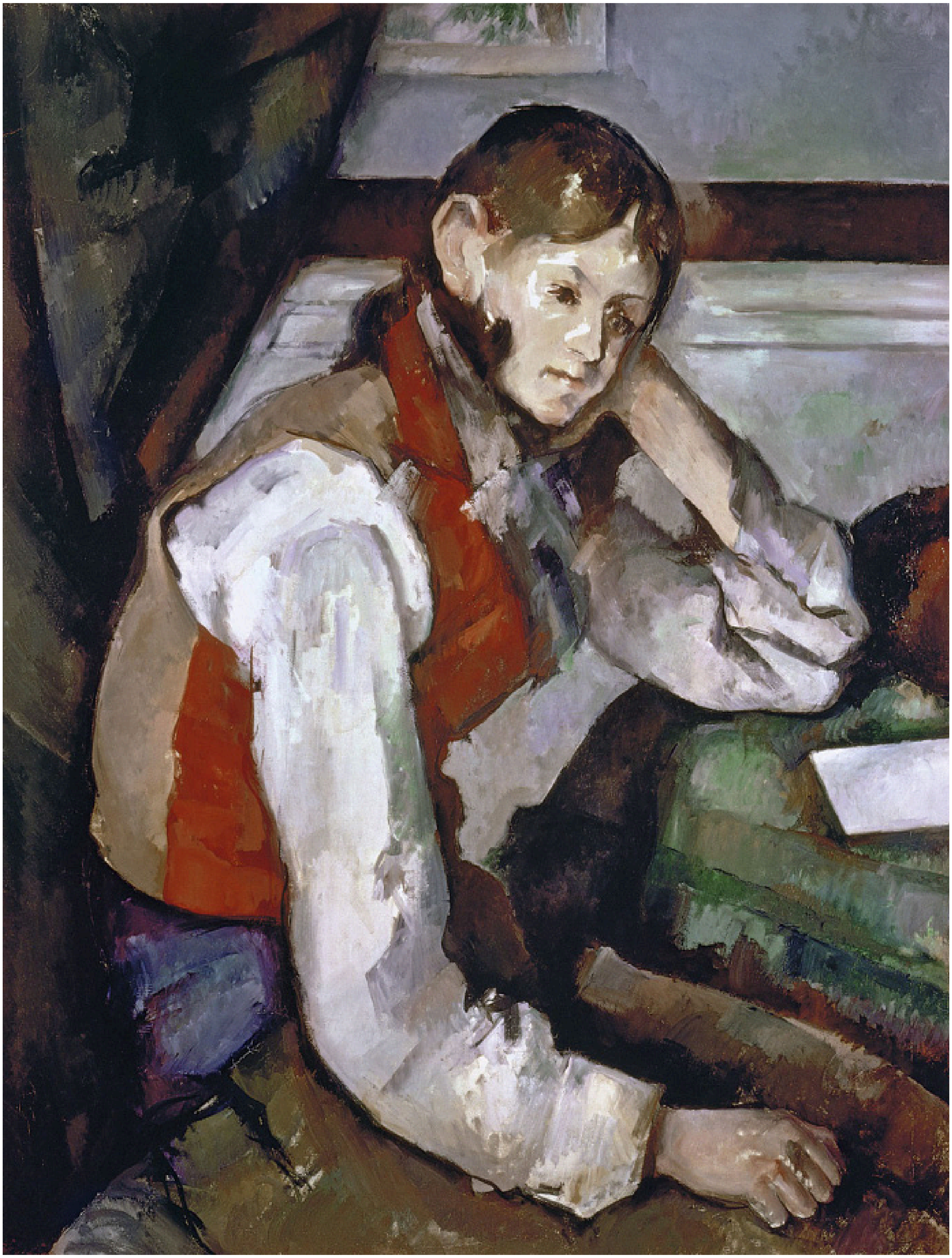
On 18th March 1990, thieves broke into the Isabella Gardner Museum in Boston dressed as policemen and stole paintings in one of the largest art thefts ever outside of wartime. Two men, in police uniforms, knocked on the security door of the museum at 1.24 am. The museum policy was that this door was not to be opened at night under any circumstance, and it has never been satisfactorily explained why the door was opened. Once in, the two men tied up the guards and, in 90 minutes, stole three Rembrandts, including the Dutch master's only seascape, *Storm on the Sea of Galilee*, and *The Concert* by Vermeer, five Degas sketches, Manet's *Chez Tortoni*, the *Landscape with an Obelisk* by Govaert Flinck and a bronze eagle from the top of a Napoleonic flag. They tried to cut another Rembrandt out of its frame, before realising it was on a panel, and ignored Titian's *The Rape of Europa*, which has since been voted Boston's most important artwork. The 13 artworks were valued at US$300m.



Portrait of Dr Gachet (1890) by Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890).



Ball at the Moulin de la Galette **(1876) by Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841-1919)**

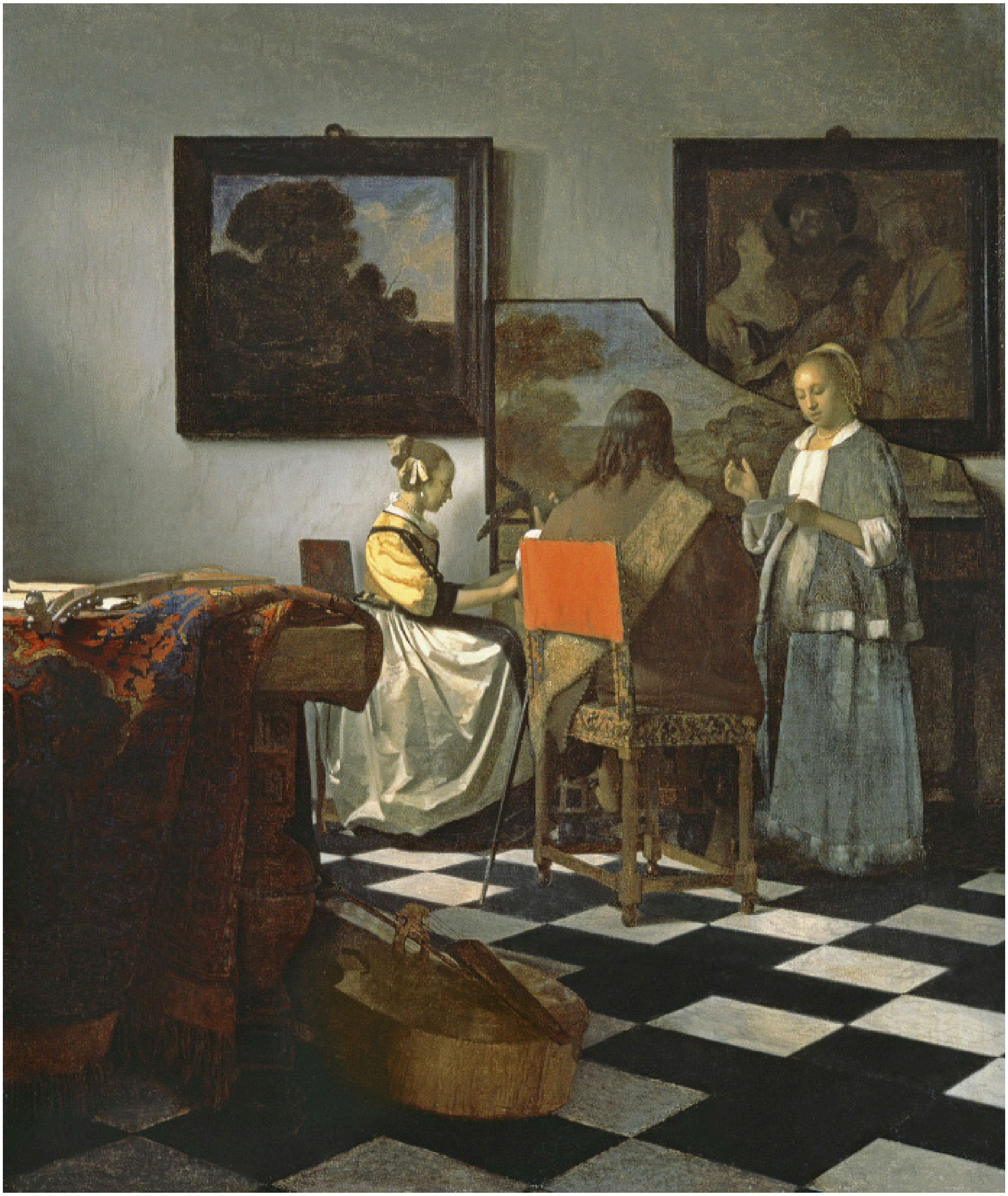


The Boy in the Red Waistcoat **(1888-90) by Paul Cézanne (1839-1906).**

Early recovery efforts focused on the Boston mafia and the IRA but, despite countless leads over the years, the paintings are still at large. Terrorist organisations and drug dealers have frequently targeted artworks to use as currency in drug deals, where paintings can change hands for between 5 and 10% of their open market value, and can be used to show off to other criminals.

Some museums have suffered repeatedly. The IRA robbed Russborough House four times starting in 1974. Russborough House, a fine example of Palladian architecture in County Wicklow, Ireland, had been bought by Sir Alfred Beit in 1952 as a home for his family and art collection that included works by Thomas Gainsborough, Rubens, Vermeer and Goya. In 1974, an IRA gang that included the heiress, Rose Dugdale, pistol whipped, bound and gagged the Beits, before stealing 19 paintings worth £8m at the time.

Virginia Ironside of Miss Ironside's School in Kensington, West London, commented on Dugdale, 'Everyone adored this generous, clever and dashing millionaire's daughter, who was full of life and laughter.'[1] However, Dugdale took a, 'lunge to the left' after reading philosophy at St Anne's College, Oxford. In 1973 Dugdale robbed her own family home in Devon and gave her £150,000 inheritance to the poor. Her boyfriend, a court-martialled former guardsman, Walter Heaton, was imprisoned, and Dugdale made her way to Ireland, joining the IRA where she was involved in hijacking a helicopter and dropping bombs in milk churns on an RUC station in Strabane, Northern Ireland, before the Russborough House robbery.



The Concert **(*c.* 1658-60) by Jan Vermeer (1632-1675).**

The Gardai started a national hunt for the paintings, which included Vermeer's *Lady Writing a Letter with her Maid*, the only Vermeer in private ownership in Britain, and found all the paintings in the boot of a car next to a house rented by Dugdale in Glandore, County Cork. Dugdale received a 9-

year sentence. as she was convicted, she shouted that Britain was ‘a filthy enemy’ and raised a clenched fist in defiance to supporters in the public gallery.

In 1986, another IRA gang led by martin Cahill (better known as ‘the General’) robbed Russborough. In □001 and □00□ an old IRA associate of Cahill’s, Martin Foley, also raided Russborough. Certain paintings, such as Vermeer’s *Lady Writing a Letter to her Maid* and Gainsborough’s *Madame Bacelli* were stolen several times over in the four IRA raids. Some of the paintings stolen, such as Claude Joseph Vernet’s set of *Night*, *Sunset*, *Midday* and *Morning* were painted for Russborough in the 1750s and had been in the house for over □00 years before the IRA raids. Most of the paintings have been recovered over the years with Vermeer’s *Lady Writing a Letter with her Maid* and Goya’s *Portrait of Dona Antonia Zarat’* returning in 199□. Cahill’s 1986 haul was valued at the time at £□0m. Sixteen of the stolen paintings were recovered, leaving only two still missing at the time of writing in □01□.

Some paintings are as tempting to thieves as they are fascinating to the general public. Edvard Munch, whose work was deemed degenerate by the Nazis and swapped for works more to their liking, has been the target of more recent robberies in 1994, □004 and □005. In 1994, a version of Edward Munch’s *The Scream*, one of his most iconic works (and the world’s most expensive at auction when another version made US$1□0m in □01□), was stolen from the National Gallery in Oslo and held for ransom before being recovered later in the year. On □□nd august □004, another original of *The Scream* was stolen together with Munch’s *Madonna*. This time the thieves targeted the munch museum where they stole the paintings in broad daylight at gunpoint. Both these paintings were recovered on □1st august □006, but although three men have been convicted for their involvement, the gunmen themselves are still at large, trying to avoid an 8-year jail sentence.

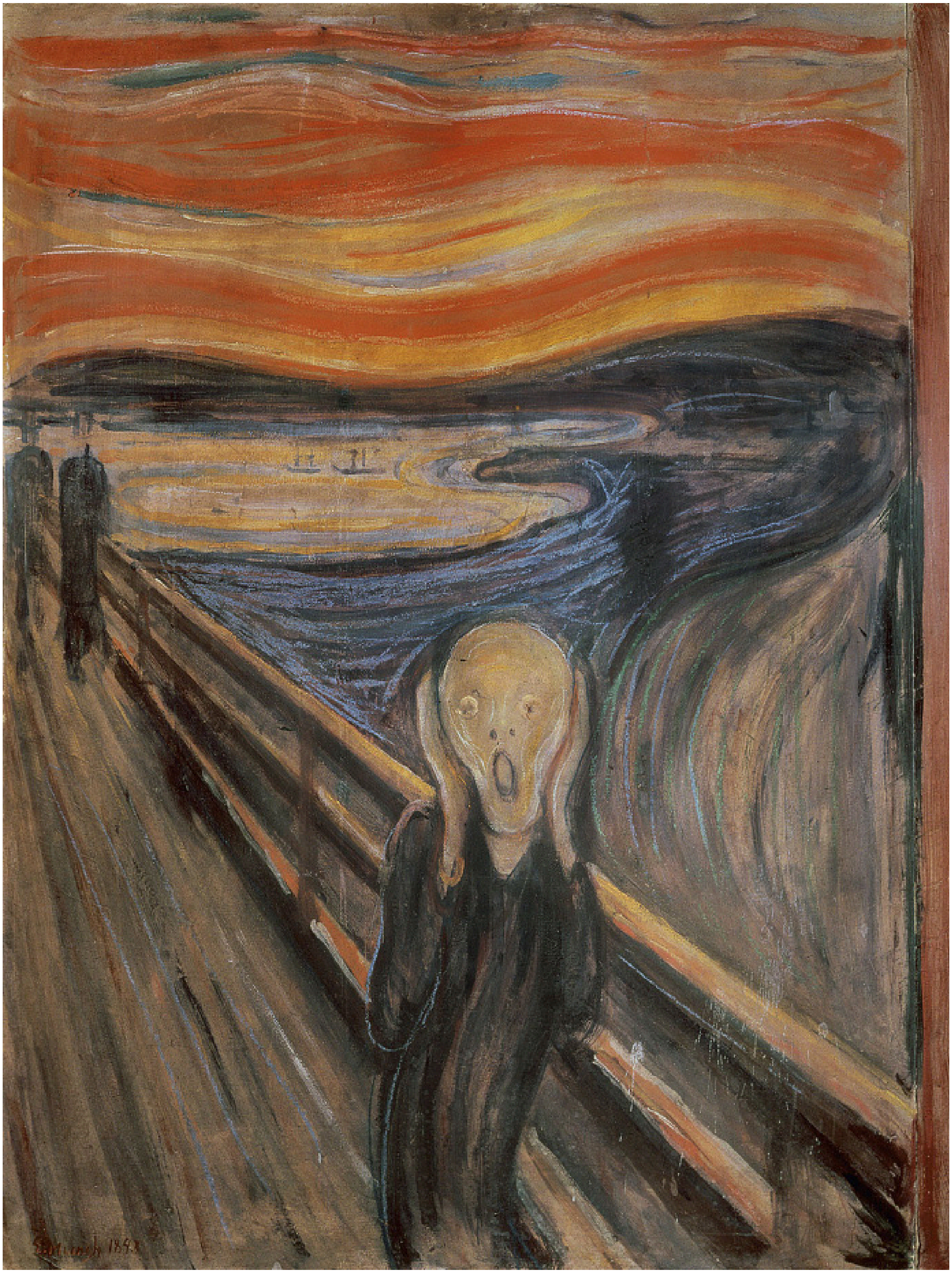
Irrespective of its quality, anything small and easily moved is at risk from opportunistic thieves, but specialist thieves are attracted to the most famous names. Even the world’s most famous painting, Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa* was stolen by an Italian thief in 1911 and spent □ years missing until recovered in a car boot in Florence in 191□ when the man tried to sell it.

Rembrandt’s *Jacob de Gheyn III* is the world’s most stolen painting. Rembrandt painted the Dutch engraver Jacob de Gheyn in oil on an oak panel in 1632. It forms part of a pair with de Gheyn’s friend Mauritz Huygens and they are both depicted wearing similar ruffs and black doublets, but facing in opposite directions. The small size of the painting, 299.72×248.92 mm, has probably contributed to its being stolen on so many occasions. It has been nicknamed the ‘takeaway Rembrandt’ and has been stolen four times since 1966. On the third occasion in September 1981 the painting was removed from its home at Dulwich Picture Gallery in London before being recovered by police from four men they apprehended in a taxi. In 1983 a burglar smashed a skylight and descended into the gallery before using a crowbar to remove the painting from the wall. Although the police arrived within 3 minutes, the thief escaped. The painting was found on 8th October 1986 in a luggage rack at the train station of a British army garrison in Münster, Germany. On two further occasions when the painting was stolen, it was recovered firstly, on top of a bicycle, and secondly, underneath a bench in a graveyard in Streatham.

Thanks to novels, newspaper headlines and films such as the *Thomas Crown Affair*, art theft has captured the public imagination like few other crimes. There is endless speculation as to the destination of artworks and whether there is a mastermind stealing artworks for his own private collection, which he keeps squirreled away in a vault or remote location. However, experts close to the trail of art theft such as Julian Radcliffe do not believe such a person exists, ‘It’s a fantasy, in 2000 cases I have worked on only 2 or 3 were not stolen for financial gain.’[2] Radcliffe wants to clean up the art world and estimates that 3% of art circulating on the art market at any one time has been stolen. He wants the art market to instigate better checks on provenance before transactions are conducted. For a fee, the ALR will check all its databases and give a certificate indicating a clean bill of health if the painting hasn’t been looted.

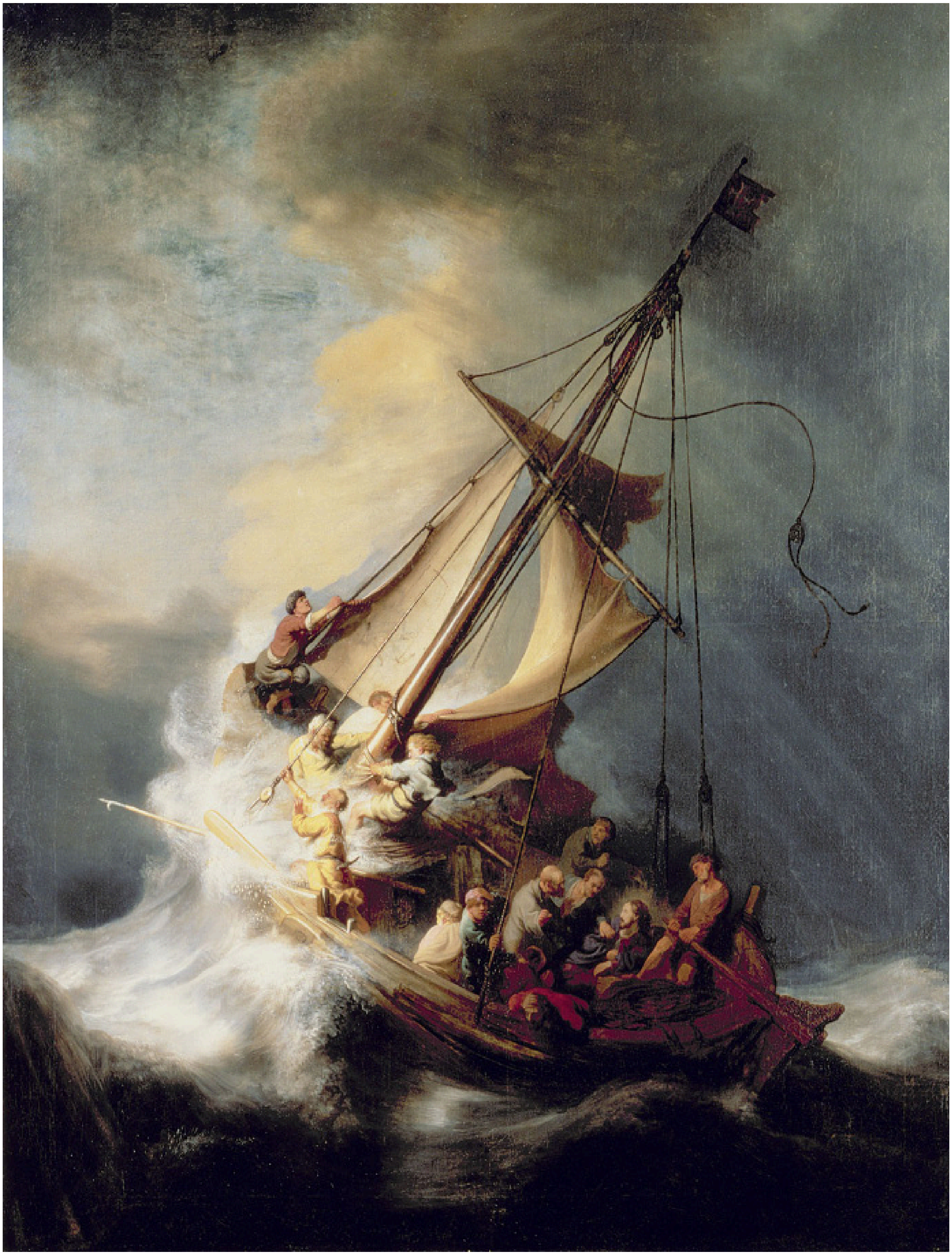
Radcliffe has had some major successes including the recovery of Cézanne’s *Bouilloire et Fruits* worth US$30m, 21 years after it and six lesser works had been stolen in 1978 from a home in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. The ALR contains 180,000 items with valuations ranging from US$3,000 to $100,000,000. When they receive an inquiry on a stolen item, they inform the police and collect 10% commission on the value of the item from the owner in the event of a successful recovery. He also works on complicated cases of disputed ownership and helps broker compromises between new owners who may have bought stolen items in good faith and original owners who want compensation.

So where do these huge quantities of paintings go? Some are bartered by criminal organisations in exchange for drugs. Others get hidden when the criminals find out just how ‘hot’ the items are when they are listed on the ALR and Interpol. However, it is odd how many famous paintings simply vanish with no one getting caught and no ransom being demanded. In several cases, even when a ransom has been offered, such as the US$5m for Vermeer’s *The Concert* from Boston, or the €530,000 for Picasso’s *Portrait of Dora Maar* stolen from the yacht *Coral Island* moored off Antibes on 11th March 1999, no one has come forward.

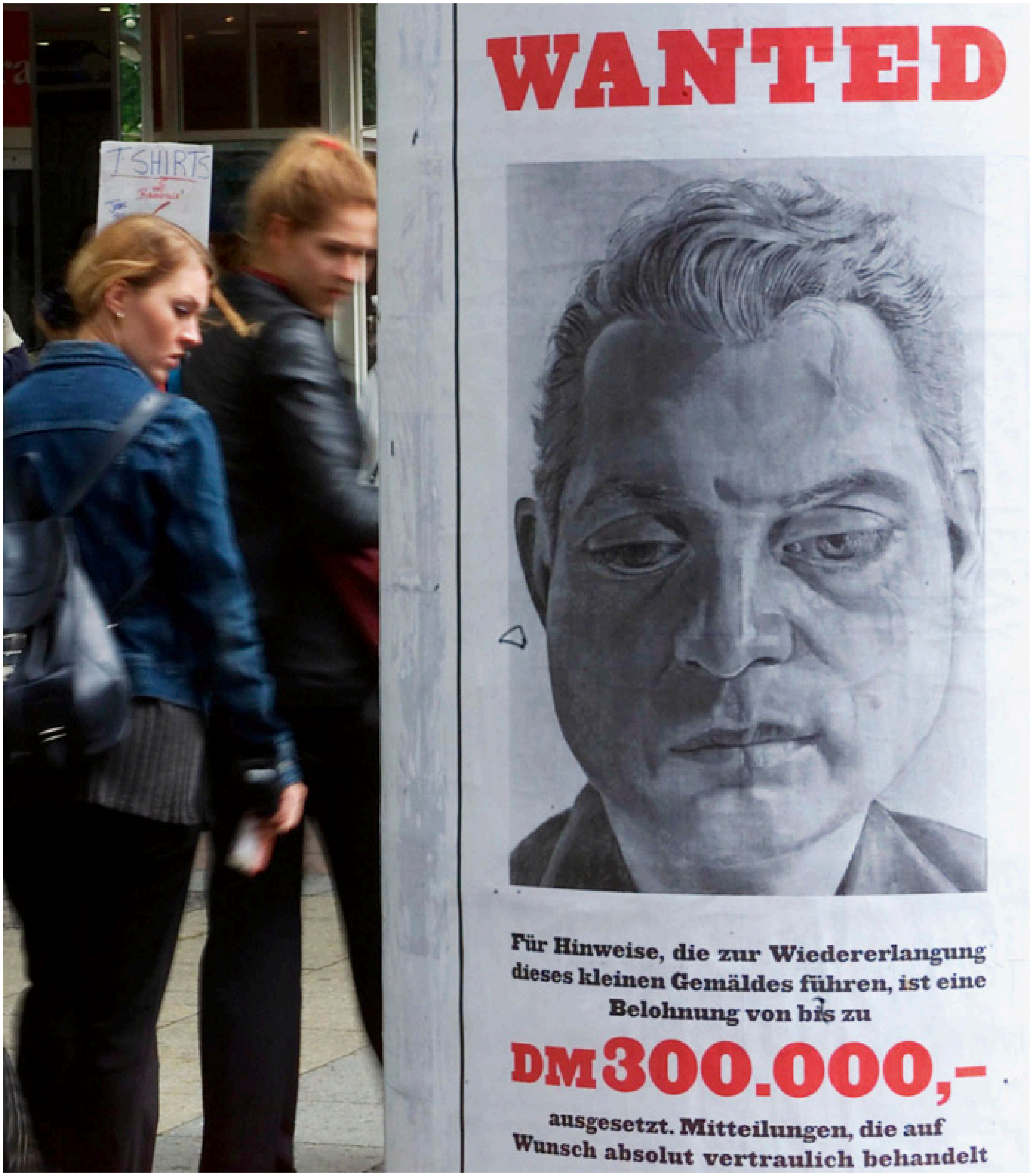

EMunch 1893

The Scream **(1893) by Edvard Munch (1863-1944).**

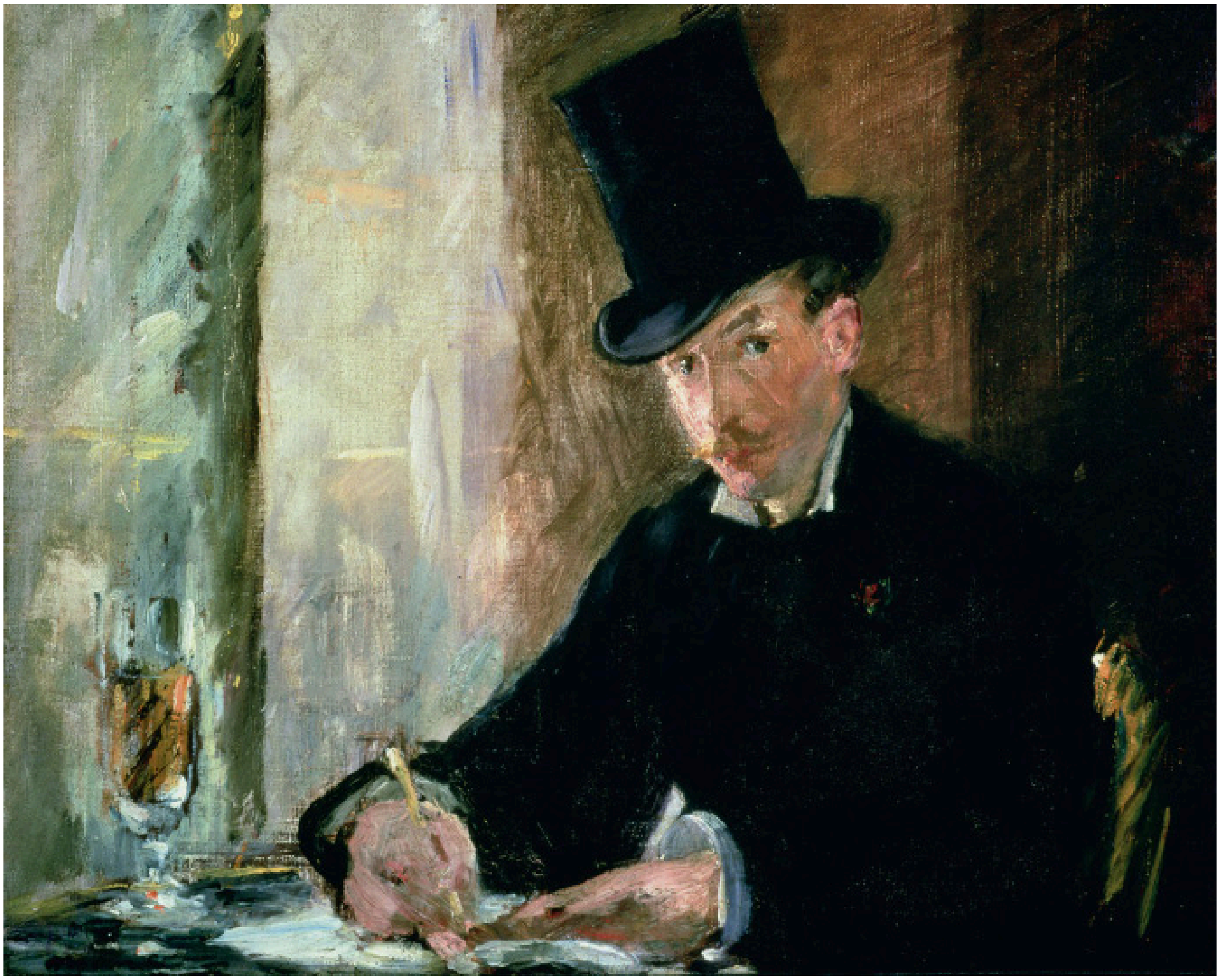
Some of these thefts are definitely to order. Cézanne’s *Auvers sur Oise* was stolen from the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford at midnight on millennium night, 31st December 1999, in the midst of fireworks, when the guards were having their own private celebrations. The thief descended down a rope through a skylight and removed the painting, ignoring the dozen other masterpieces hanging in the same room. The Cézanne depicts the village of Auvers sur Oise in a strip running horizontally across the middle of the painting with a shock of greens and browns blocked in below and above. It is an important transitional work between Cézanne’s early and mature periods and difficult to find on the open market even if you had the £3-5million to buy it. Someone wanted this particular painting and commissioned a professional thief to remove it.



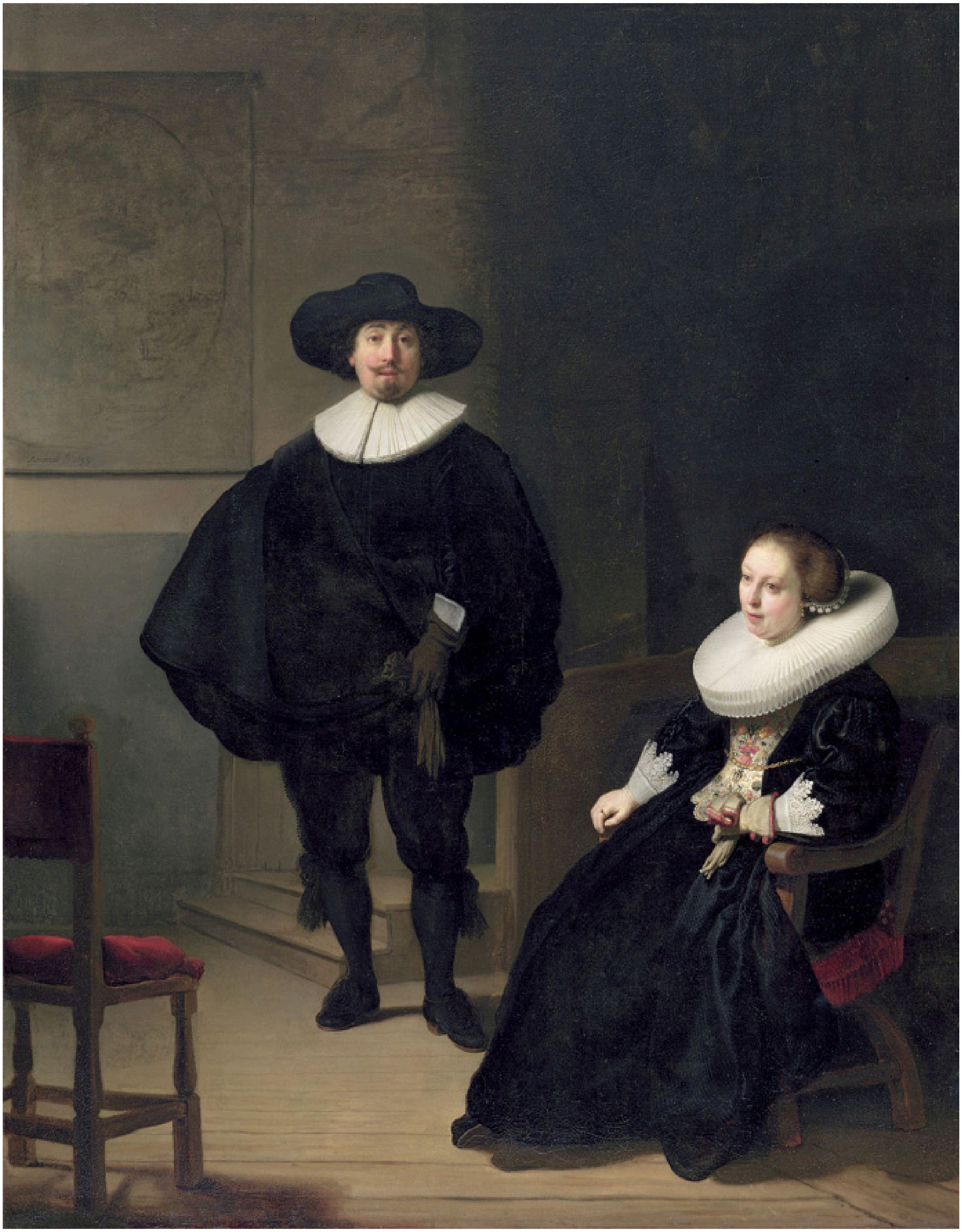
***The Storm on the Sea of Galilee* (1633) by Rembrandt (1606-1669).**


T SHIRTS
WANTED
Für Hinweise, die zur Wiedererlangung
dieses kleinen Gemäldes führen, ist eine
Belohnung von bis zu
DM300.000,-
ausgesetzt. Mitteilungen, die auf
Wunsch absolut vertraulich behandelt

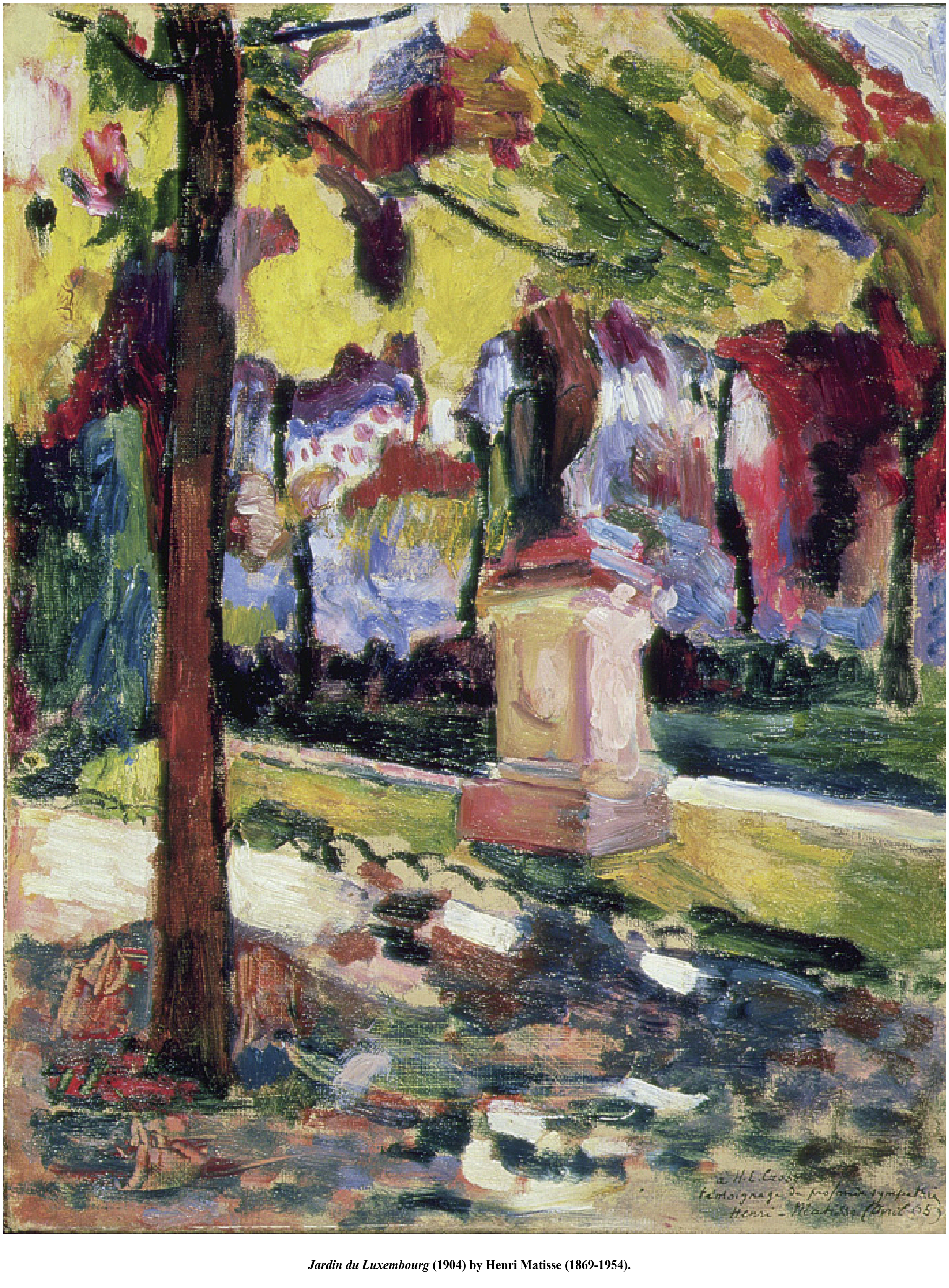
People look at a wild-west-style wanted poster with a portrait of the late British artist Francis Bacon by Lucian Freud in downtown Berlin June 22, 2001. Berliners woke to find their city plastered with 2,500 posters offering a reward of 300,000 DM ($13,000) for the return of a pocket-sized painting stolen 13 years before.



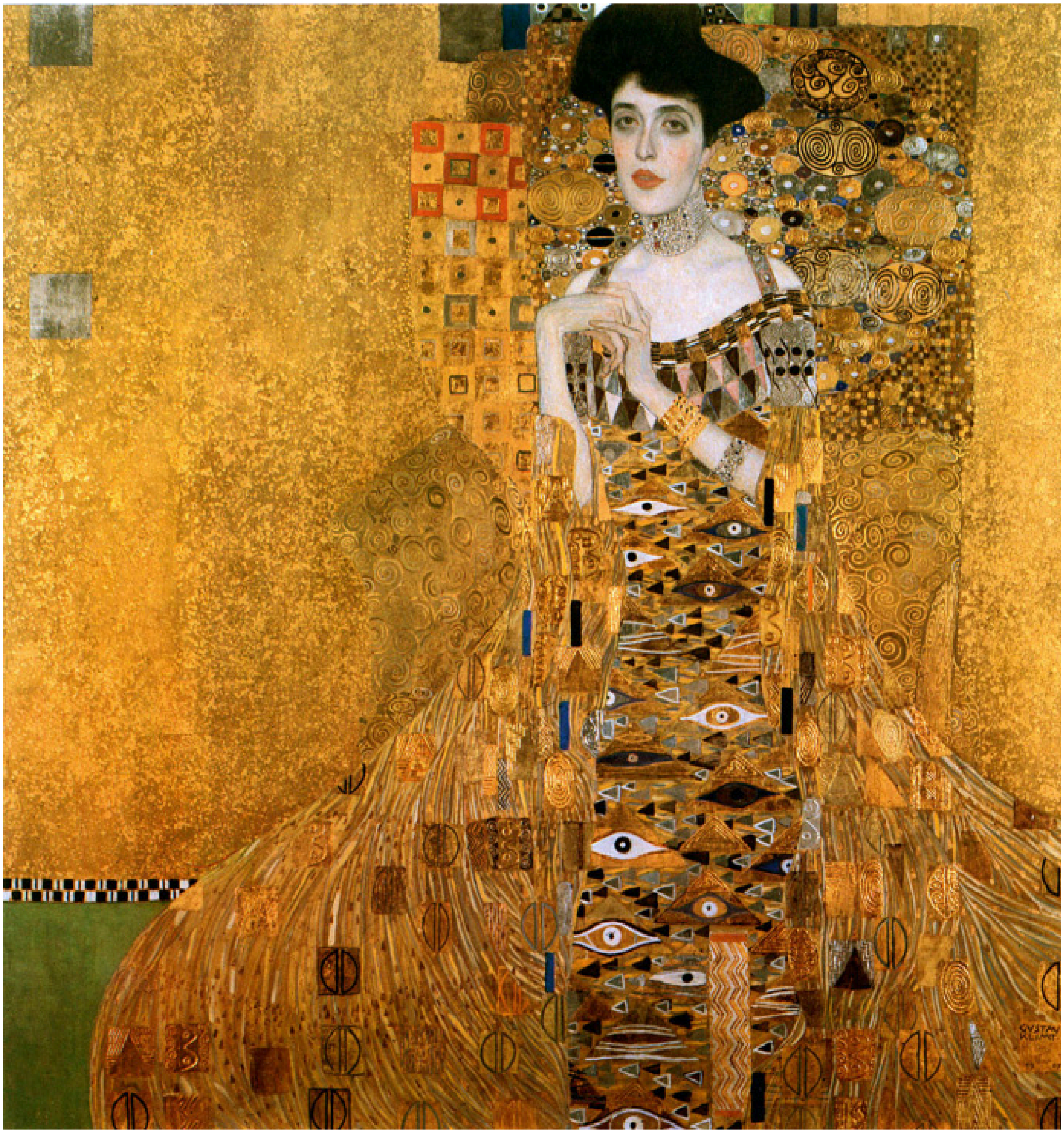
Chez Tortoni **(1878-80) by Edouard Manet (1832-1883)**



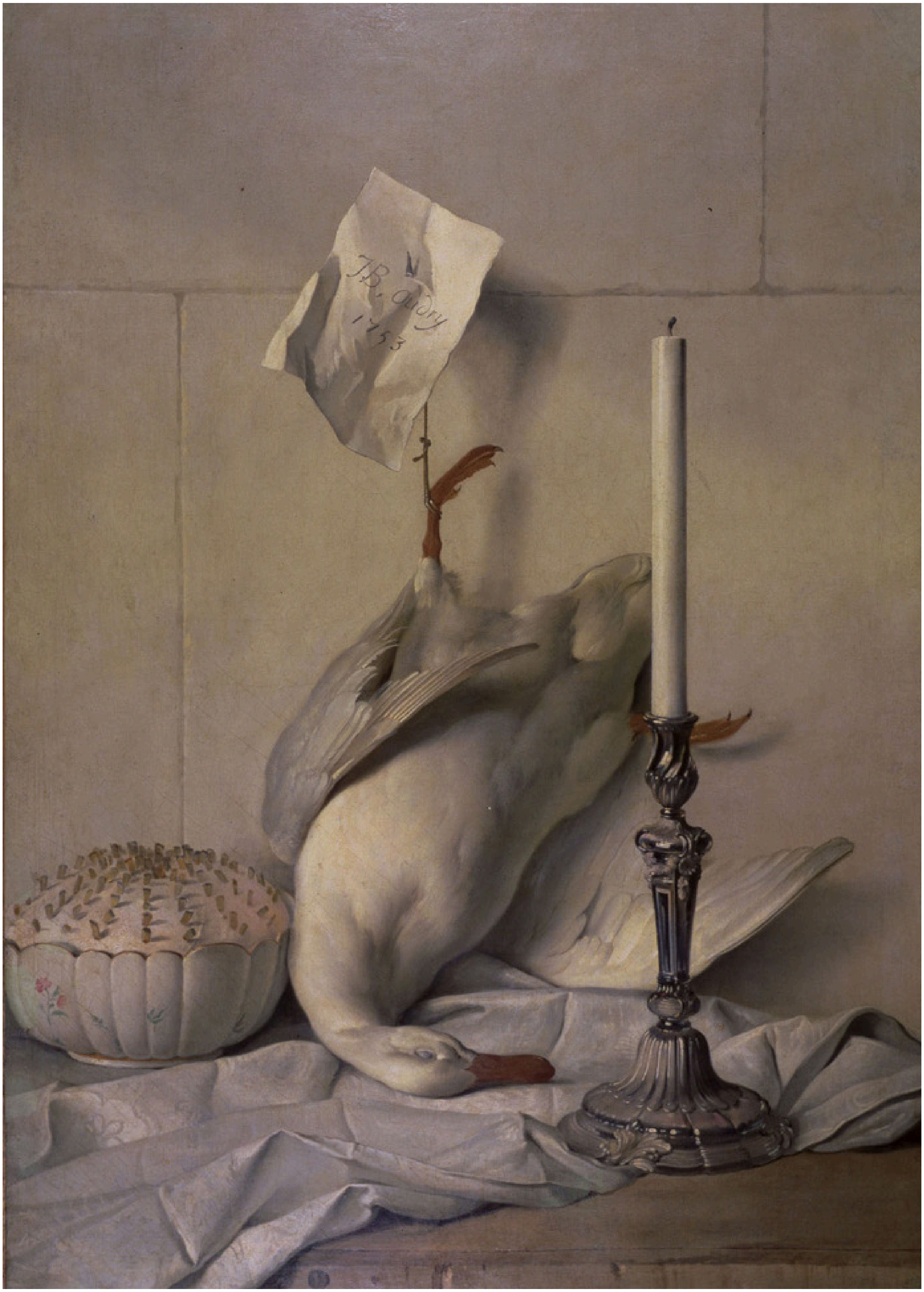
Portrait of a Man and Woman in Black (1633) by Rembrandt (1606-1669).


à H.E. Cross
témoignage de profonde sympathie
Henri-Matisse (Avril 05)

***Jardin du Luxembourg* (1904) by Henri Matisse (1869-1954).**


GUSTAV KLIMT

***Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer*, 1907, by Gustav Klimt (1862-1918)**


J.B. Oudry
1753

***The White Duck* (1753) by Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686-1755)**

Looking through the most expensive paintings on Interpol or the ALR databases, they include:

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio's *Nativity with St Francis and St Lawrence* (taken from the church of San Lorenzo in Palermo, Italy), missing since October 1969.

Ferdinand-Victor-Eugene Delacroix's *Lionne et Lion dans une Caverne* (taken from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), missing since 4th September 1972.

Jean-Francois Millet's *La Baratteuse* and *Portrait of Madame Millet* (both taken from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), missing since 4th September 1972.

Thomas Gainsborough's *Portrait of Brigadier General Sir Robert Fletcher* (taken from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), missing since 4th September 1972.

Jean Baptiste Corot's *La Reveuse a la Fontaine* and *Jeune Fille Accoudée sur le Bras Gauche* (both taken from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), missing since 4th September 1972.

Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn *Landscape with Cottages* (taken from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), missing since 4th September 1972.

Pierre-Auguste Renoir's *Roses in a Vase*, *Portrait de Madame Albert Andre* and *Jeunes Femmes à la Compagne* (all taken from the Musée de Bagnols-sur-Ceze in Gard, France), missing since 12th November 1972.

Henri Matisse's *View of Saint Tropez* (taken from the Musée de Bagnols-sur-Ceze in Gard, France), missing since 12th November 1972.

Albert Marquet's *The Old Port of Marseille* (taken from the Musée de Bagnols-sur-Ceze in Gard, France), missing since 12th November 1972.

Andrew Wyeth's *Moon Madness*, contact lost with owner in political unrest in the Philippines, missing since the mid 1980s.

Lucian Freud's *Portrait of Francis Bacon* (taken from the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, Germany), missing since 27th May 1988.

Govaert Flink's *Landscape with an Obelisk* (taken from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Massachusetts), missing since 18th March 1990.

Eduard Manet’s *Chez Tortoni* (taken from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Massachusetts), missing since 18th March 1990.

Johannes Vermeer’s *The Concert* (taken from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Massachusetts), missing since 18th March 1990.

Rembrandt Harmensz Van Rijn’s *Storm on the Sea of Galilee* and *A Lady and Gentleman in Black* (both taken from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, Massachusetts), missing since 18th March 1990.

Thomas Gainsborough’s *Portrait of William Pitt the Younger* (taken from Lincoln’s Inn, London), missing since 16th September 1990.

Jean-Baptiste Oudry’s *The White Duck* (taken from Houghton Hall, Norfolk, England), missing since 30th September 1990.

Georges Braque’s *Still Life* (taken from the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden), missing since 8th November 1993.

Gustav Klimt’s *Portrait of a Woman* (taken from the Galleria Ricci Oddi, Piacenza, Italy), missing since 18th February 1997.

Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot’s *Le Chemin de Sèvres* (taken from the Louvre Museum, Paris, France), missing since 3rd May 1998.

Paul Cézanne’s *Auvers-sur-Oise* (taken from the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, England), missing since 1st January 2000.

Claude Monet’s *Beach at Porville* (taken from the Polish National Museum, Poznan), missing since 19th September 2000.

Jean-Léon Gérôme’s *Pool in the Harem* (taken from the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, Russia), missing since 22nd March 2001.

Adriaen van Ostade’s *Drinking Peasant in an Inn* (taken from the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, the Netherlands), missing since 25th March 2002.

Alberto Giacometti’s *Figurine* (taken from the Hamburg Museum, Germany), missing since 25th May 2002.

Maxfield Parrish’s *Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney Mansion Murals*, Panels 3B and 3A, (taken from the Edenhurst Gallery, West Hollywood, California), missing since 28th July 2002.

Henri Matisse’s *Odalisque in Red Pants* (taken from the Sofia Imber Contemporary Art Museum, Caracas, Venezuela), missing since circa 2000. There are reports in summer 2012 that this painting has been recovered in Miami. Thieves covered their traces for 2 years by replacing the original with a poor fake ... a common looting ploy. President Hugo Chavez was photographed admiring the fake whilst singing its praises.

Vincent van Gogh’s *Congregation Leaving the Reformed Church in Nuenen* and *View of the Sea at Scheveningen* (both taken from the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands), missing since 7th December 2002.

Unknown *The Lion of Nimrud* (taken from The Iraq National Museum, Baghdad), missing since April 2003.

Parmigianino (Francesco Mazzola)’s *The Holy Family* (taken from the Santo Spirito in Sassia Hospital, Rome, Italy), missing since 31st July 2004.

Workshop of Donatello *The Virgin and Child in a Niche* (taken from the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England), missing since 29th December 2004.

Henry Moore’s *Vanitas* (taken from the Henry Moore Foundation, Much Hadham, Hertfordshire, England), missing since 15th December 2005.

Marc Chagall’s *The Tribe of Dan* (taken from the Modern Masters Fine Art Gallery, Palm Desert, California), missing since 22nd December 2005.

August Strindberg’s *Night of Jealousy* (taken from the Strindberg Museum in Stockholm, Sweden), missing since 15th February 2006.

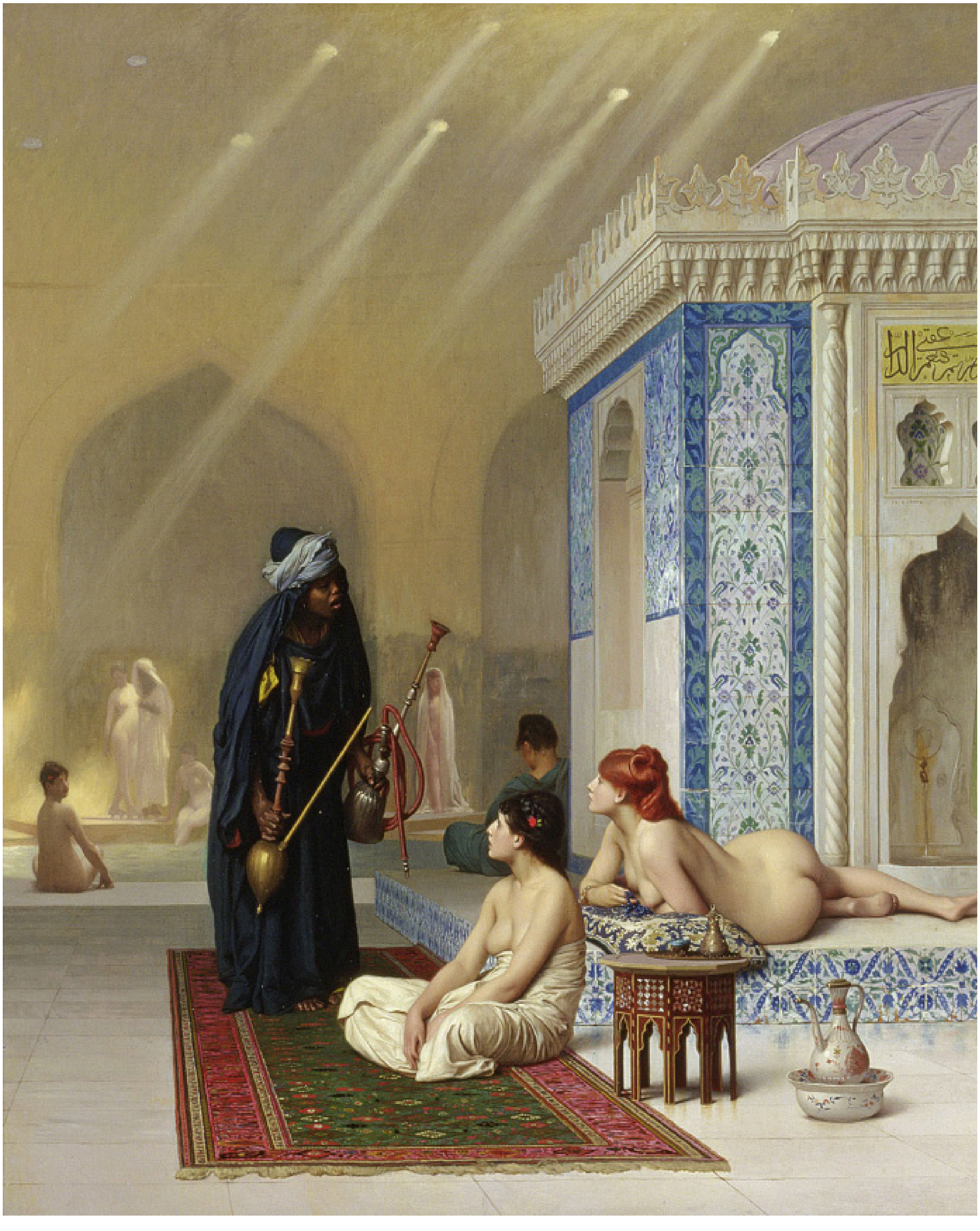
Claude Monet’s *Marine* (taken from the Chacara do Ceu Museum, Rio de Janiero, Brazil), missing since 24th February 2006.

Henri Matisse’s *Luxembourg Gardens* (taken from the Chacara do Ceu Museum, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), missing since 24th February 2006.

After WWII, survivors were too traumatised to worry about their stolen artworks and were just relieved to be alive. However, children and now grandchildren, without the wartime emotional baggage and looking for a potentially large payout, have started pursuing looted artworks, particularly descendants of Jewish-owned collections, confiscated or acquired under duress by the Nazis. There are groups of lawyers specialising in restitution cases who are prepared to operate on a ‘success only’ basis; if successful they claim part of the value of the returned artworks. Auction houses, for whom selling the restituted artworks is highly profitable, encourage restitution and have specialists who help with individual cases in return for the contract to sell the items *post* restitution.

In June 2006 the cosmetics magnate, Ronald S. Lauder, purchased Gustav Klimt’s portrait of *Adele Bloch-Bauer* from Maria Altmann for a reported US$135m, the highest price ever paid for a painting. Mrs Altmann was the niece and heir of Mr Bloch-Bauer, a Jewish sugar industrialist, who had commissioned the painting of his wife. Mr Bloch-Bauer fled Austria after it was annexed by Germany in 1939 and died in Switzerland in 1945. His wife Adele died of meningitis in 1943. Bloch-Bauer left the paintings with another four by Klimt to the three children of his brother, Gustav, of whom only Maria was still alive by the time the court case came to a head.

In 1942, Maria Altmann and her husband Fritz fled Austria and settled in Los Angeles. The five Klimts had been seized by the Nazis and devolved into the ownership of the Austrian State. After the war Mrs Altmann attempted to recover the artworks, palaces, sugar company and other artworks that had been stolen by the Nazis. The Austrians argued that Mrs Bloch-Bauer had bequeathed the Klimts to Austria and, without the original documents, there was nothing the family could do. In the mid 1980s a journalist named Hubertus Czernin found a copy of Mrs Bloch-Bauer’s will that expressed a wish but did not specifically require that the Klimts go to Austria.



Pool in a Harem **(*c.* 1876) by Jean Léon Gérôme (1824-1904).**

In 2000, on behalf of Mrs Altmann, the specialist restitution lawyer, E. Randol Schoenberg, sued the Austrian government in the United States. Austria moved to dismiss the case, but the Supreme Court ruled in June 2004 that Mrs Altmann could sue Austria in the USA. In January 2005, an arbitration tribunal in Austria ruled in favour of Mrs Altmann, awarding her ownership of the five paintings. In addition to the portrait of *Adele Bloch-Bauer* acquired by Ronald Lauder, there was another portrait of *Adele Bloch-Bauer* from 1911 and three landscapes: *Beechwood* (1913), *Apple Tree 1* (*c.*1911), and *Houses in Unterach on Lake Atter* (1916). After the sale of the portrait of *Adele Bloch-Bauer* by Christie's to Ronald Lauder for his tiny museum on Fifth Avenue, New York, the Neue Galerie, Christie's auctioned off the remaining paintings.

Baye

Return of Courbet's looted painting *Woman and Bird* to its original home at a castle in Antwerp, 22 December 2004

Before the auction the five paintings were exhibited together at the Neue Galerie on Fifth Avenue between 13th July and 9th October 2006. Referring to the *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer* he had acquired for the Galerie, Ronald Lauder said, 'This is our Mona Lisa ... it's a once in a lifetime acquisition.'[3] Lauder was closely involved in the sale and Mrs Altmann said, 'Mr Lauder has a great understanding of Austria and a great love for Klimt.'[4] Certainly the public broadcast of the alleged price paid of US$135m underpinned the vast prices subsequently paid for the remaining four paintings sold shortly afterwards on 8th November 2006 at Christie's New York branch on Rockefeller Plaza. The hammer prices were:

Birchenwald/Buchenwald (1903) - $40,336m
Adele Bloch-Bauer II (1912) - $87,900m
Apfelbaum (c. 1912) - $33,056m
Hauser in Unterach am Attersee (c. 1916) - $31,376m

The four paintings plus the painting acquired by Lauder totalled US$327,668 million.

On Monday 6th February 2006, in another high-profile restitution case, the Netherlands State Secretary for Culture, Medy van der Laan announced that the Dutch government, in accordance with a recommendation from the Advisory Committee on the Assessment of Restitution Applications for Items of Cultural Value and the Second World War, would return most of the works claimed by the heirs of Jacques Goudstikker.

Of the 267 artworks returned, 202 had formerly been part of the trading stock of the pre-war Amsterdam dealership J. Goudstikker N.V. Jacques Goudstikker, a leading Old Masters dealer, died while escaping the Netherlands by ship in May 1940. He fell into the hold of *SS Bodegraven* and may have been murdered by the Nazis who were after his art collection. A few days later Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering arrived on the gallery doorstep. Under the threat of confiscation, and overriding the objections of Goudstikker's widow, Goering acquired the collection for the price of two million guilders, a fraction of its real value, in a typical Nazi sham transaction designed to provide the Reichsmarschall's actions with a veneer of legality.

Then, in a series of rigged shareholder meetings and sham transactions, the German banker, Alois Miedl, one of Goering's henchmen, gained ownership of Goudstikker's remaining assets: the Goudstikker trade name, the remaining art and properties including Nijenrode castle in Breukelen, the Herengracht 458 building and the country estate Oostermeer in Oudekerk aan de Amstel. Using Goudstikker's name, Miedl continued trading very successfully during the war selling art to the Nazi high command.

Goudstikker had had around 1000 paintings stolen. After the war Goudstikker's widow, Desi, embarked on a bitter 7-year battle between 1946 and 1952 to try unsuccessfully to regain the collection. After the war the Americans had returned 280 of them to the Netherlands with instructions to restore them to their rightful owners. The Dutch government, like the Austrian government with the Bloch-Bauer Klimts and countless other looted artworks, declined to return them to the Goudstikkers and they were absorbed into Dutch national collections.

With the mood swinging towards the restitution of WWII-looted art in the 1990s, the Goudstikkers began another protracted legal battle for their artworks in 1998. Finally in 2005, the Dutch Restitutions Committee advised the Dutch government that the Goudstikker case had been unjustly handled by the post-war government and the artworks claimed by the Goudstikker heirs should be returned to them. The decision had international consequences and other Goudstikker items were returned to the family from dealers, auction houses, private collections, museums and governments in the USA, Israel, Germany, England and Austria. A Degas drawing was restituted by the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and a still life by Rachel Ruysch was returned to the family from the Gemäldegalerie in Dresden.

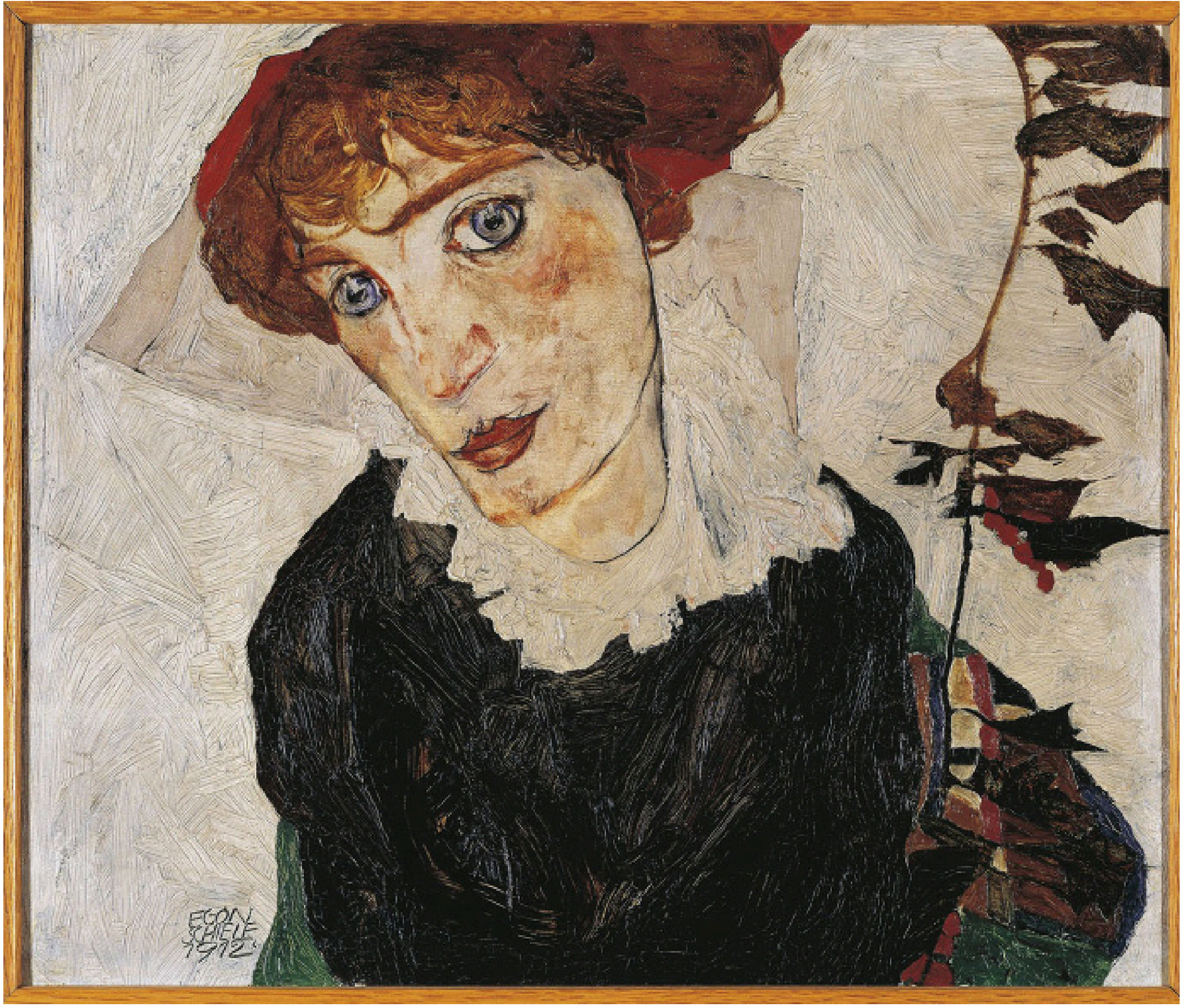
Marie Von Saher, the sole heir to the collection, said:

> At long last, justice. A dream has come true for me and my daughters, Charlene and Chantal. Since the government rejected our initial application in 1998, we have waged our battle for justice, and we have finally achieved what sadly eluded my mother-in-law, Desi, directly after the war. Her mission to restore the legacy of Jacques Goudstikker and recover the property that had been taken from him became mine when she died in 1996 ... Without the help of committed lawyers, art historians, government officials and friends, we could never have come this far. By uncovering the true Goudstikker story, they have restored to my family a pivotal part of its history.[5]

Christie's, who had been helping with this and other restitution claims in order to drum up business, were equally delighted with the result. Monica

Dugot, Director of Restitution and Senior Vice President, Christie's International, commented:

> It is an honor to be involved in the family's important effort to celebrate the legacy of Jacques Goudstikker and to increase awareness about the fate of this historic collection as well as other objects looted during the Nazi-era. We take the question of works of art spoliated during the Nazi-era very seriously and are committed to working with clients, museums, dealers and the claimant community in finding clarity on such complex and sensitive issues and in helping to find fair and appropriate solutions.



Portrait of Wally **(1912) by Egon Schiele (1890-1918)**

On 24th February 2007, Christie's announced that they were to sell 100 of the 200 paintings restituted to the Goudstikker heirs over three auctions on 19th April in New York, 5th July in London and November in Amsterdam.

Christie's sales machine quickly went into action. Nicholas Hall, International Director, Christie's Old Master Picture Department, said:

> Jacques Goudstikker was an extraordinary dealer who had wide-ranging and fascinating taste. This is arguably the most important collection of Old Master pictures ever restituted. The pictures from the collection we are offering will attract the attention of museums, dealers and collectors alike, as these works have not been on the market for over 65 years. The *Ferry Boat with Cattle on the River Vecht near Nijenrode* by Salomon van Ruysdael is one of the stars of the collection. Painted on panel, it is in perfect condition: rich in impasto with one of the luminous blue skies, tinged with pink and yellow, for which this artist is so renowned. This painting carries an estimate of \$3,000,000-\$5,000,000. We feel it is worthy of any great collection of Dutch art, private or institutional.

The Ruysdael actually sold below estimate for US\$2,280,000, but material fresh to the market generally sold well at mid estimate or above. After WWII the MFAA men of the US army made enormous efforts to return items found in the US zone to their country of origin, but by 1950 apathy prevailed in an exhausted Europe. Governments proved unwilling to honour agreements they had made with the Americans, whilst signing for the artworks, that they should seek out their owners. France, Austria and the Netherlands in particular were obstructive towards families seeking the return of their artworks. Art dealers and auction rooms ignored the issue and happily sold looted artworks. However, a *fin de siècle* rush of sympathy towards the victims of WWII led to a series of restitutions such as the aforementioned Goudstikker and Bloch-Bauer cases.

Capitalising on the shift in mood towards facilitating restitution, and the Clinton administration's willingness to allow US foreign policy to be hijacked by domestic interest groups, Edgar Bronfman and the World Jewish Congress (WJC) launched restitution claims against the Swiss State in 1995 that involved rewriting history. Bronfman, the billionaire chief of a media and liquor empire, and President of the WJC since 1979, started his campaign by becoming the largest family donor to the US Democratic Party in the 95/96 election with a soft-money family and business donation of US\$1,261,700 to the Clinton-Gore campaign.

Bronfman enlisted the help of the Chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, the Republican Alfonse D'Amato, the Undersecretary of State, Stuart Eizenstat, President Clinton, a network of state officials including

New York City Comptroller Alan Hevesi, an army of lawyers and the media, to put out a disturbing tale. Apparently, it had emerged some 50 years after the war that Switzerland had been an ally of Nazi Germany, shared culpability in the Holocaust, had stolen the assets of murdered Jews and managed to keep money in bank accounts away from descendants of murdered Jews. There was no hard evidence for any of this.

On 23rd April 1996 Senator D'Amato opened a hearing of the US Senate Banking Committee he chaired with, 'We have in our possession recently declassified documents that shed new light' on Switzerland's role in WWII, before going on to claim that there were 'hundreds of millions of dollars' languishing unclaimed by Jewish beneficiaries hidden in Switzerland.[6] Bronfman said, 'the documents uncovered by your committee and by others working elsewhere demonstrate that the Swiss were far from neutral. Their assistance to the Nazi war machine through the clandestine conversion of looted gold into Swiss francs enabled the Germans to buy fuel and other raw materials they needed to prolong the war. Some estimates in testimony before the US Senate hearings following the war suggest the costs may have been staggering in the lives of American soldiers, Allied soldiers, Jews and other civilians across the continent' before continuing dramatically, '... I speak to you today on behalf of the Jewish people. With reverence, I also speak to you on behalf of the six million who cannot speak for themselves.' Having taken on himself the mantle of Jewish oppression in WWII, Bronfman increased D'Amato's estimate of 'hundreds of millions' to 'billions'. The money would be distributed by Bronfman's WJC and be given to survivors of the Holocaust, and museums and writers who would keep the memory of the Holocaust alive.

This threat was delivered to the Swiss by Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat, US special envoy for property claims in Central and Eastern Europe, Undersecretary of Commerce and a personal friend of Bill Clinton. Eizenstat reported to the Senate that his purpose was to achieve openness about reporting on the bank accounts and that heirless assets should be distributed to poor elderly Jews. He asked the question that the Swiss were also puzzling over, 'Why the sudden surge of interest in these tragic events of four decades ago? The most compelling reason is the extraordinary leadership and vision of a few people who have put this issue on the world's agenda ... Edgar Bronfman, Israel Singer [of the WJC], Senator Alfonse D'Amato of New York and President Bill Clinton ... Our task is to complete the unfinished business of the twentieth century's most traumatic and tragic events.' D'Amato concluded that he was ashamed to be an American.

Switzerland's 4.5 million people were in a difficult position during WWII, surrounded by an occupied France, an annexed Austria, and 80 million hostile Germans to the north and 40 million hostile Italians to the south. By the mid 1930s they had decided that Nazism discredited everything that Switzerland stood for, such as democracy, economic liberalism, and a multiethnic state. They knew they couldn't defeat Germany if Germany decided to invade, but they decided to make the prospect of invading as unattractive as possible.

The Swiss, a hardy mountain people, make good soldiers, as has been recognised since Julius Caesar, who said, '*Cum virtute omnibus praestarent*' (They stood above all others in 'military' virtue).[7] To this day, they maintain National Service of at least 19 days per annum for every able-bodied man aged between 20 and 42. In 1512 Machiavelli wrote that the Swiss infantry had never been defeated.

The Swiss army, 440,000 strong, withdrew from the flat undefendable northern plains and dug in in the southern Alpine valleys, abandoning two-thirds of the population to a lightly defended border. They made it clear to the Nazis, whom they loathed, that they would fight to the last man. The commander of the Swiss army, General Guisan gave the order, 'Each man, even if he is isolated, must defend himself where he is ... even if encircled [units] must fight to the last bullet, and then attack with their blades ... so long as any man has a bullet or blade, he has no right to surrender.'[8]

In the dark days of 1940 Switzerland had no allies it could call on and it maintained its neutrality with a combination of belligerence and co-operation. Guisan observed, 'Switzerland will be able to avoid a German attack only if German High Command calculates that a war would be long and costly, that it would uselessly ignite a set of struggles in the heart of Europe, and would upset the execution of their other plans ... If we are drawn into a fight, the point will be to sell our skin as expensively as possible.'[9]

Switzerland outlawed the Nazi party, shot spies and arrested everyone seen to be sympathetic to the Nazis. They co-operated with the Nazis by supplying them with machine tools, foodstuffs like cheese, and armaments in return for the coal they needed in order to survive. All imports and exports had to go through two cordons, the Axis powers and the Allies and so, contrary to the secrecy alleged by Bronfman, what happened in Switzerland during the war was more transparent than in virtually any other country in Europe. The Swiss National Bank gave the Nazis 1.2 bn worth of Swiss francs in exchange for gold delivered to Bern, but they provided the same service to the Allies to the tune of 2.2 bn Swiss francs for which they were paid in gold which remained in the vaults of the Bank of New York.

During the war Switzerland constantly negotiated with the Allies and the Nazis over trade and the exchange of Swiss francs for gold. At various times the Allies withheld *navicerts*, which allowed Swiss cargoes free passage and the Germans withheld coal. As Swiss francs were the only international currency exchangeable for gold during the war, it was convenient for both the Allies and the Axis powers to keep Switzerland neutral. Whilst Switzerland held off the Nazis with trade, it continued to fortify its mountain redoubt in southern Switzerland until by 1943 it was in a strong defensive position. Even in 1941 and 1942, under considerable pressure from the Nazis, Swiss exports to the Allies never fell below 17% of their total exports and by 1943, as German power retreated, they increased it to over 20%.

There is no evidence of anti-Semitism in Switzerland during the war as implied by the WJC. General Guisan sent soldiers around Switzerland to talk to people, trying to stiffen the Swiss spirit and keep people informed of what was happening. One of the speeches his officers gave out was called Speech Plan 22 and was entitled, ‘The Jewish Question.’ It set out the basic themes of anti-Semitism and then refuted each one with facts, statistical analysis and ethical argument. Switzerland absorbed 0.5% of its population in Jewish refugees during the war, as compared with 0.1% in the USA.

In 1942, having absorbed 80,000 refugees of all nationalities and with Switzerland one-tenth the size of France or Italy and one-twentieth the size of Germany, the Swiss started to panic and the Minister of Justice and Police declared, ‘the lifeboat is full.’[10] By 1941 Jews constituted the largest group of foreign refugees. Although Switzerland did restrict refugees at this time, there was a widespread sympathy for the Jews, and Heinrich Rothmund, the civil servant in charge of Swiss immigration at the Federal Department of Justice, said, ‘After all I have heard to this point about the inhuman, cruelly devised treatment to which the Jews of Austria are subjected, I have not been able to bring myself to take on the responsibility of delivering them to their executioners.’[11]

Switzerland tried and failed to obtain a commitment from the Allies to receive more Jews at the Evian conference in 1938 and more desperately at the Bermuda conference of 1943. At the latter conference, the USA and Britain refused to do anything to help the Jews, bomb the railway lines leading to the extermination camps in Germany or even acknowledge that the Jews were the Nazis' principal victims. Britain made one small concession that, if it could be arranged by the Red Cross, 4,500 Jewish children and 500 adult guardians could emigrate to Palestine. By far the largest number of Jews who had transited through Switzerland found refuge in Spain and Portugal.

Rather than discriminate against the Jews, Switzerland compromised by closing its borders to all refugees on 13th August 1942. The Swiss Jewish community was furious and enlisted Albert Oeri, a liberal member of parliament, who pointed out to parliament that Switzerland had better rescind the order or it would share responsibility for what happened to the Jews. In 1943, Switzerland reopened the floodgates and by the end of the war had accepted 300,000 refugees, of whom 200,000 were Jewish, proportionately five times the number of Jews that the USA accepted.

After the war there was little enmity towards Switzerland from the Allies and considerable gratitude from the Jewish people. Churchill, whose knowledge of Switzerland's wartime machinations presumably exceeded that of Bronfman and D'Amato wrote:

> I put this down on the record. Of all the neutrals, Switzerland has the greatest right to distinction. She has been the sole international force linking the hideously sundered nations and ourselves. What does it matter if she has not been able to give us commercial advantages we desire or has given too many to the Germans to keep herself alive? She has been a democratic state for freedom in self defence among her mountains, and in thought, in spite of race, largely on our side.[12]

The USA never made any formal charges against Switzerland nor did any US department or government agency ever complain as to the terms of a 1946 US-Swiss agreement that settled claims arising out of WWII.

The Washington Agreement of 1946 that normalised relations between Switzerland and the USA was signed after a 2-month negotiation that examined Switzerland's WWII role in detail, and the Allies were in possession of, and made use of, all Nazi records removed from Germany. Switzerland undertook to pay the Allies CHF 250m, liquidate all German assets in Switzerland, keeping half and giving half to the Allies, and the Allies abolished all blacklists against the Swiss and released 4.5bn Swiss francs frozen in the USA. Article II.2 stipulated, ‘The allied Governments declare for their part that, in accepting this amount, they waive in their name and in the name of their banks of issue all claims against the Government of Switzerland and the Swiss National bank in connection with gold acquired during the war from Germany by Switzerland. All relations relative to such gold will thus be regulated.’[13]

The agreement was revisited in 1952 when Switzerland paid a further CHF 121.5m to enable the USA to renounce their claim on the German assets in Switzerland. The Swiss and the Allies believed the matter was now closed. Dr L. von Castelmur, who wrote up a definitive account of the negotiations for the Swiss Embassy finished his report with the question, ‘Are there, in the cascade of “new discoveries” in the archives, fundamentally new elements which would justify the renegotiation of an agreement that was executed almost forty five years ago? It seems to me that the facts clearly militate against such an assertion ...’[14]

In 1995 the WJC began generating articles suggesting that Switzerland had participated in the Holocaust and was hiding Jewish money. The Swiss had carried out an audit in 1962, which had picked out 750 persons who had accounts with Jewish names. In 1995 they asked Paul Volker, former Chairman of the Federal Reserve under Presidents Carter and Reagan, to conduct another survey which worked on the premise that unless there were reasons to believe otherwise any dormant account was Jewish. Volker found 800 accounts with approximately US$32m.

The Swiss bankers presumed this was what Bronfman was after and at a lunch they offered him the US$32m. However, Bronfman ignored the offer as he was after as much as his power could bring him. Although the Clinton administration was careful not to commit anything in writing, they made it clear to the Swiss that they were behind Bronfman, and Bronfman believed that this, allied with the unpleasant press he was stirring up about Switzerland, would net him considerably more. Bronfman then turned to the traditional US weapon of choice in fleecing weak corporate enemies, the class action lawsuit. In the 1990s law firms had succeeded in a US$246bn lawsuit against the tobacco companies, which they then remitted partly back to the Democratic Party in donations. With a class action lawsuit, Bronfman could claim to be representing millions of people, no trial was required and the suit would effectively remain a private action.

Bronfman brought the class action lawsuit in Brooklyn to ensure he got the right judge in Edward Korman, who readily accepted that Bronfman represented millions of plaintiffs victimised by the Swiss government and banks. New York has more Jews than Tel Aviv and Bronfman was sure of local support. At a meeting on 14th December 1997, Undersecretary Eizenstat met with Switzerland's top bankers in Zurich. Swiss public outrage on the issue ensured that the Swiss government would pay nothing and so the WJC targeted the Swiss banks.

Fortunately for the WJC, the leading Swiss banks were making US$4bn a year in New York and the forthcoming merger between Union Bank of Switzerland and Swiss Bank Corporation, which would create UBS, needed a new licence to continue operating in New York. The Democratic New York City Comptroller Alan G. Hevesi made it clear on 24th March that no licence would be forthcoming unless the banks paid up. After negotiation, UBS and Credit Suisse settled at US$1.25bn and Hevesi dropped his objection to the new licence.

The Swiss people were furious and Christophe Blocher, leader of the right-wing Swiss People's Party asked how Americans dared to criticise Switzerland's neutrality when America had remained neutral until attacked by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor. And how could they criticise Switzerland's behaviour towards Jews in WWII when they had taken more Jewish refugees than America? And how would the American people feel if any European country tried to extract funds from the US to pay alleged victims of America's war in Vietnam? Richard Capone, of the new now-merged UBS, mused how much they could have saved by buying influence from the Democratic Party direct before adding, 'But it never occurred to me that in America we would have to pay bribes.'[15]

Flushed with success, the WJC launched a suit against German companies such as Krupp, Deutsche Bank and Volkswagen, alleging that they had profited from slave labour during WWII, using the same tactics as they had against Switzerland with a class action lawsuit filed in Brooklyn with Judge Korman on 11th September 1998. Once again the Clinton administration backed the suit through Stuart Eizenstat, and President Clinton brought up the subject when meeting with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder. The hammer blow was provided by the fact that

Deutsche Bank was in the process of buying the Bankers Trust Company in New York and required a licence from New York City Comptroller Alan Hevesi, who said he would hold off granting it until a settlement was reached. On 17th December 1999 the German government and German companies agreed to pay US$5.1bn to 'American class action lawyers and Jewish Groups' in exchange for a total release from future law suits. In December 1999 and April 2000 further suits were filed against France and Austria with varying success.

The WJC has subsequently become involved in controversy with an audit conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers of the WJC's accounts in Switzerland from 1995-2004 finding that, 'over the years US$3.8m disappeared from bank accounts' and that there were, 'significant unreconciled cash withdrawals where there is no documentation of usage of the funds.'[16] The Swiss affiliate of WJC discovered that US$1.2m was involved in suspicious money transfers between accounts in New York, Switzerland and London. New York State attorney Eliot Spitzer, who himself had to resign in March 2008 due to his involvement in a high-priced prostitution ring, launched an enquiry.

Although Bronfman initially defended Rabbi Israel Singer during the Attorney General's inquiry, he fired him in March 2007 accusing him of stealing money in an article published by the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, 'Singer helped himself to cash from the WJC office, my cash,' Bronfman wrote in a letter to European Jewish Congress President Pierre Besnainou before continuing, 'The final blow came when we discovered he was playing games with his hotel bills in Jerusalem ... [Singer] boasted of his ability to put one over presidents and prime ministers, and with the same degree of pride enumerated heads of state as his personal friends. In retrospect, it has emerged that, during the same period, Singer himself behaved as though he himself were head of state, living ostentatiously at the expense of the donors to the WJC.'[17]

Haaretz also discussed that internal WJC documents suggested that friction had been developing between Rabbi Singer and Bronfman because Singer opposed the succession of Bronfman's son to the Presidency of the WJC.

In May 2007 the *New York Times* reported, 'Edgar Bronfman Sr., the billionaire liquor magnate who is its [WJC] largest patron, has resigned as its president'[18] because of the turmoil. The *Jewish Daily Forward* commentated that the resignation ended, 'one of the most prolific and controversial tenures in American Jewish Leadership ... The move follows three years of internecine fighting between Bronfman and the organization's affiliates across the world.'[19] Bronfman was succeeded as chairman by Ronald S. Lauder on 10th June 2007.

In the short term the WJC succeeded in extorting significant funds from Switzerland, Germany and other European countries, and President Clinton helped provide billions of francs and marks to his contributors. However, the funds came at a price and the Europeans were under no illusions that the US government was acting on behalf of a private group. The Europeans resented the payouts, the rewriting of history and being bullied by an America that never wastes an opportunity to tout its own moral high ground, religious certainty and unshakable conviction in the justness of whatever cause it happens to be interested in at the time. The result was a diminishing respect for America, which manifests itself in resistance to America's foreign policy, a growing anti-Semitism, fading support for Israel and a hardening attitude towards restitution of artworks stolen in WWII.

In 1997, the Vienna-based Leopold Foundation, with support from the Austrian government, lent a painting by Egon Schiele *Portrait of Wally* that it had acquired after WWII to the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York for an exhibition. The heirs of Lea Bondi claimed it had been looted and persuaded New York District Attorney to impound it. The US Attorney for the Southern District has taken over the case, which is still pending, and is trying to decide whether to return the US$15m painting to the heirs of Bondi or to the Leopold Foundation. MOMA maintains it has not taken sides on ownership but its chairman, Ronald S. Lauder, is also treasurer of the World Jewish Congress and chairs its commission for art recovery. The painting remains locked away in a federal warehouse, much to the irritation of the Leopold Foundation, and many of the leading Swiss collectors have said they will no longer lend their paintings to the USA for exhibitions.

Switzerland has been a major depository of stolen art since WWII because of the Nazis selling looted art through Swiss dealers and auction houses like Theodor Fischer. Julian Radcliffe of the Art Loss Register says, 'An extraordinarily high proportion of the stolen pictures that we discover have been held in Swiss bank vaults.' However, Radcliffe adds on Switzerland, 'It used to be a very good place to deal until the law changed in summer 2006 whereby it became mandatory for a buyer to undertake due diligence. The law in Switzerland then moved ahead of other nations rather than lagging behind.'[20] Under this law, a buyer who is deemed not to have exercised due diligence when buying a stolen artwork can be prosecuted with a sentence that can involve jail time.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the mood appears to be moving against the restitution of WWII artworks, due to accusations against the WJC and their extortion of funds from European powers. There is also a sense of fatigue and a feeling that the grandchildren of the victims of WWII have little connection with the artworks that were stolen. Most of these pictures are on public display in museums and, when returned, are normally auctioned off by the heirs before disappearing into private collections. Such claims are costly and time consuming and it is hard to ascertain what really happened over 50 years ago. It wasn't only the Jews, everybody in mainland Europe was desperately selling their artworks, often at low prices, in order to survive; trying to establish what was a coerced sale at a sham price and what was merely a desperate sale at a low price is almost impossible.

In April 2008 E. Randol Schoenberg, the lawyer who obtained restitution from Austria of the five works by Gustav Klimt, including the famous portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer which was subsequently reportedly sold for the world record price of US$135m, failed to obtain the return of a sixth Klimt, the *Portrait of Amalie Zuckerkandl*. The Austrian Supreme Court rejected the appeal of the heirs of Ferdinand Bloch-Bauer against the decision of a 2006 arbitration not to return the painting.

According to Schoenberg, the court's decision runs counter to Austria's own laws and marks a disconcerting shift in Austria's legal position regarding restitutions and a hardening of their position. Schoenberg stated that Austria's Third Restitution Law, 'recognized that the Jewish victims (having fled or been deported) would ordinarily not have the evidence to prove what had happened to their property, so ... it became the burden of the person receiving the property to prove that the transaction was fair and untainted by Nazi persecution.' However, 'The Court held that the arbitrators made a plausible decision to interpret the 1998 art restitution law in a way that abandoned the decades-old rule shifting the burden of proof [to the person receiving the property] ... The Court wasted not a word on the unfairness to the victims of the Nazis in shifting the burden onto them after so long a time ... No longer will transactions undertaken with Jewish property during the war be presumed to be part of the Nazi plan of total expropriation and annihilation ... Rather than afford itself the power to return artworks that would be presumed under long-standing Austrian restitution laws to have been confiscated during the war, under the Court's interpretation, the government is now PROHIBITED [emphasis Schoenberg's] from returning paintings with dubious provenance.' Schoenberg said that he didn't think he would win the case, but he didn't expect to lose it so badly.[21]

As well as a hardening towards WWII restitution from European governments, there is a sense of fatigue from the Jewish people themselves. In December 2008, Sir Norman Rosenthal, former exhibitions secretary at the Royal Academy, wrote an open letter on the subject of WWII restitution to *The Art Newspaper*, which was picked up and reproduced in the *Daily Telegraph* (London) on 9th January 2009. Despite being the child of Jewish refugees, Rosenthal said, 'history is history' and that descendants 'distanced by two or more generations from the works' original owners did not, in his opinion, have an 'inalienable right' to reclaim the property of their forbears. He said that an agreement reached in Washington in 1998 that committed 44 countries to return looted art to owners or their descendants should be looked at again.

Rosenthal wrote:

> This process has been ongoing for 10 years and the items in question have often been claimed by people distanced by two or more generations from their original owners ... I believe history is history and that you can't turn the clock back or make things good again through art restitution. Ever since the beginning of recorded history, because of its value, art has been looted and as a result, arbitrarily distributed and disseminated throughout the world ... Of course, what happened in the Nazi period was unspeakable in its awfulness. I lost many relatives whom I never knew personally, and who died in concentration camps in the most horrible of circumstances. But I believe grandchildren or distant relations of people who had works of art or property taken by the Nazis do not now have an inalienable right to ownership, at the beginning of the century.[22]

In April 2000 a Spoliation Advisory Panel was established by the British Government to advise on restitution of Nazi-period looted art. Museums are required to examine their holdings, find items that may have been looted during this period, and seek advice from the Panel as to what course of action to adopt. This is still the official British position and a spokesman for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport described the current practice as ‘a simple, right and a fair way of righting historic wrongs’ and that it had ‘no plans’ to change the existing legislation. Sir Nicholas Serota, director of London’s Tate Gallery advised caution, but raised the idea of a possible moratorium at some point, saying, ‘It would be premature to impose a moratorium now but at some point in the future this may be appropriate.’[23] However, it appears that Sir Norman Rosenthal’s views touched a raw nerve in the Jewish community on this most sensitive of subjects and Anne Webber, co-chair of the Commission for Looted Art In Europe, accused Sir Norman of being ‘out of touch’.

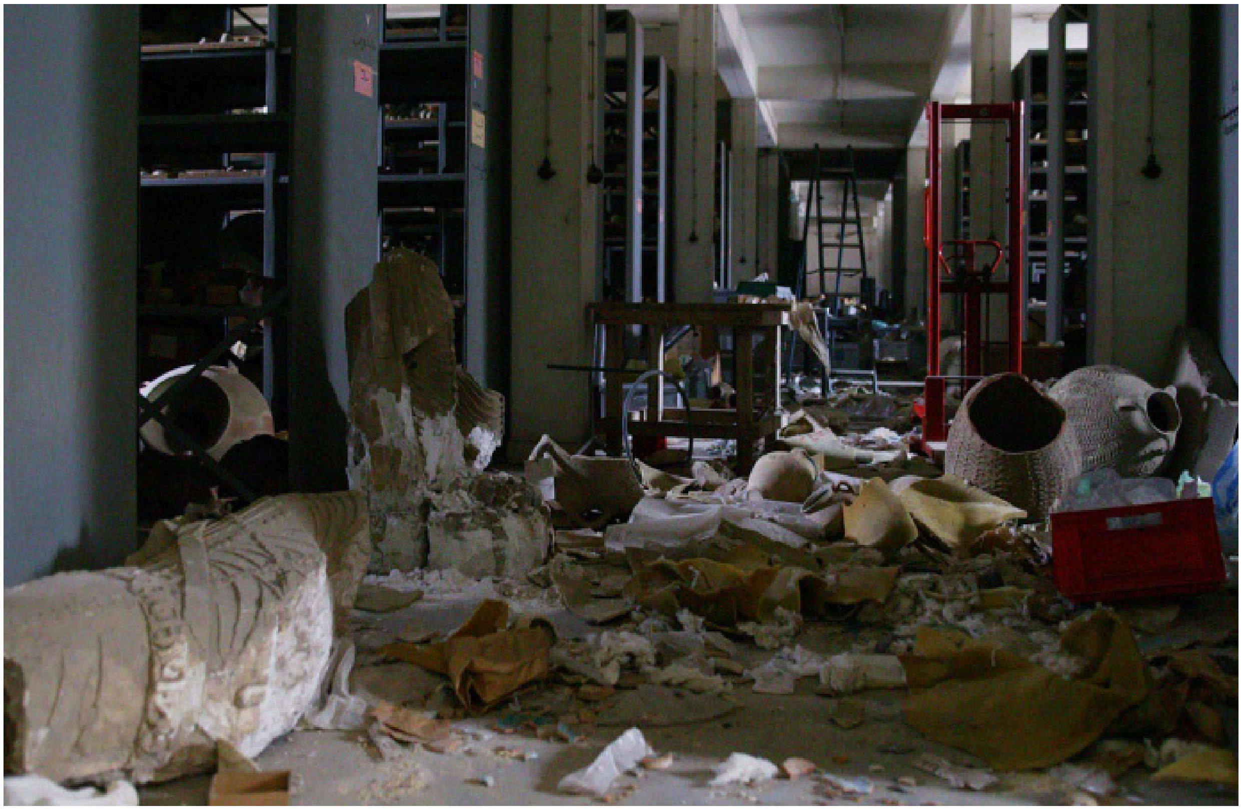
Looking at earlier restitutions, such as that conducted by the allied countries against Napoleon after the Congress of Vienna in 1815, efforts at restitution after a conflict eventually fizzle out due to exhaustion and the passage of time from the actual event, and it may be that the momentum of WWII restitution is beginning to slow.

An Assyrian human-headed winged bull, cracked by smugglers who had tried to export it illegally in the 1990s, lies on the floor at Baghdad's National Museum, June 26, 2004.

In 2003 thousands of artworks were looted from the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad following the US invasion. Because of the archaeological riches of 5000-year-old Mesopotamia, the ancient collections of the museum are amongst the best in the world. The museum had originally been formed by the British author and traveller Gertrude Bell shortly before her death in 1926. Closed during the First Gulf War out of fear of US airstrikes, the museum was reopened on 28th April 2000, the birthday of former president Saddam Hussein.

On 8th April 2003 the last staff left the museum, and it was then used as a defensive base by Iraqi forces in violation of the Geneva Convention. US forces did not shell the museum, despite receiving small-arms fire from Iraqi troops nearby. However, US forces did not secure the museum after they moved on and it suffered thefts over the next few days before international pressure forced them to secure it. Forty large statues from the public galleries were stolen, although around half of these have since been recovered, including the *Bassetki Statue*, *The Mask of Warka* and the *Sacred Vase of Warka*.

Approximately 3100 items were removed from the above-ground storerooms, including jars, pottery pieces and vessels, but 3000 of these have been recovered. Since a number of fakes were also removed, it implies the curators were not involved. However, the theft from the underground storage rooms looks like an inside job as the thieves were in possession of the keys to the cabinets. Since then, 2500 out of the 10,000 objects removed from this area, including jewellery, cylinder seals and beads, have been recovered.



The Iraq National Museum was pillaged before US forces intervened. It contains objects from the Sumerian, Assyrian, Akkadian, and Pre-Islamic eras. Some objects that were not stolen were thrown on the ground and broken.

On 12th April 2003, the Associated Press reported, 'The famed Iraq National Museum, home of extraordinary Babylonian, Sumerian and Assyrian collections and rare Islamic texts, sat empty Saturday - except for shattered glass display cases and cracked pottery bowls that littered the floor.' On 14th April, National Public Radio's Robert Siegel announced on *All Things Considered*: 'As it turned out, American troops were but a few hundred yards away as the country's heritage was stripped bare.' French President Jacques Chirac jumped on the bandwagon on 16th April 2003, declaring the incident 'a crime against humanity'. In fact, only around 15,000 items of the museum's holdings of 501,000 artefacts were stolen. Investigators estimate that around two-thirds of the missing items were taken in an inside job before the Americans reached the museum and around 5000 minor pieces were taken by looters.

After the hysteria cleared, the *Daily Telegraph* (London) reported in late 2003 that:

> Officials at the National Museum of Iraq have blamed shoddy reporting amid the 'fog of war' for creating the impression that the

> majority of the institution’s 170,000 items were looted in the aftermath of the fall of Baghdad. A carefully prepared storage plan, used in the Iran-Iraq War and the first Gulf war, ensured that tens of thousands of pieces were saved, they said. They now believe that the number of items taken was in the low thousands, and possibly hundreds.

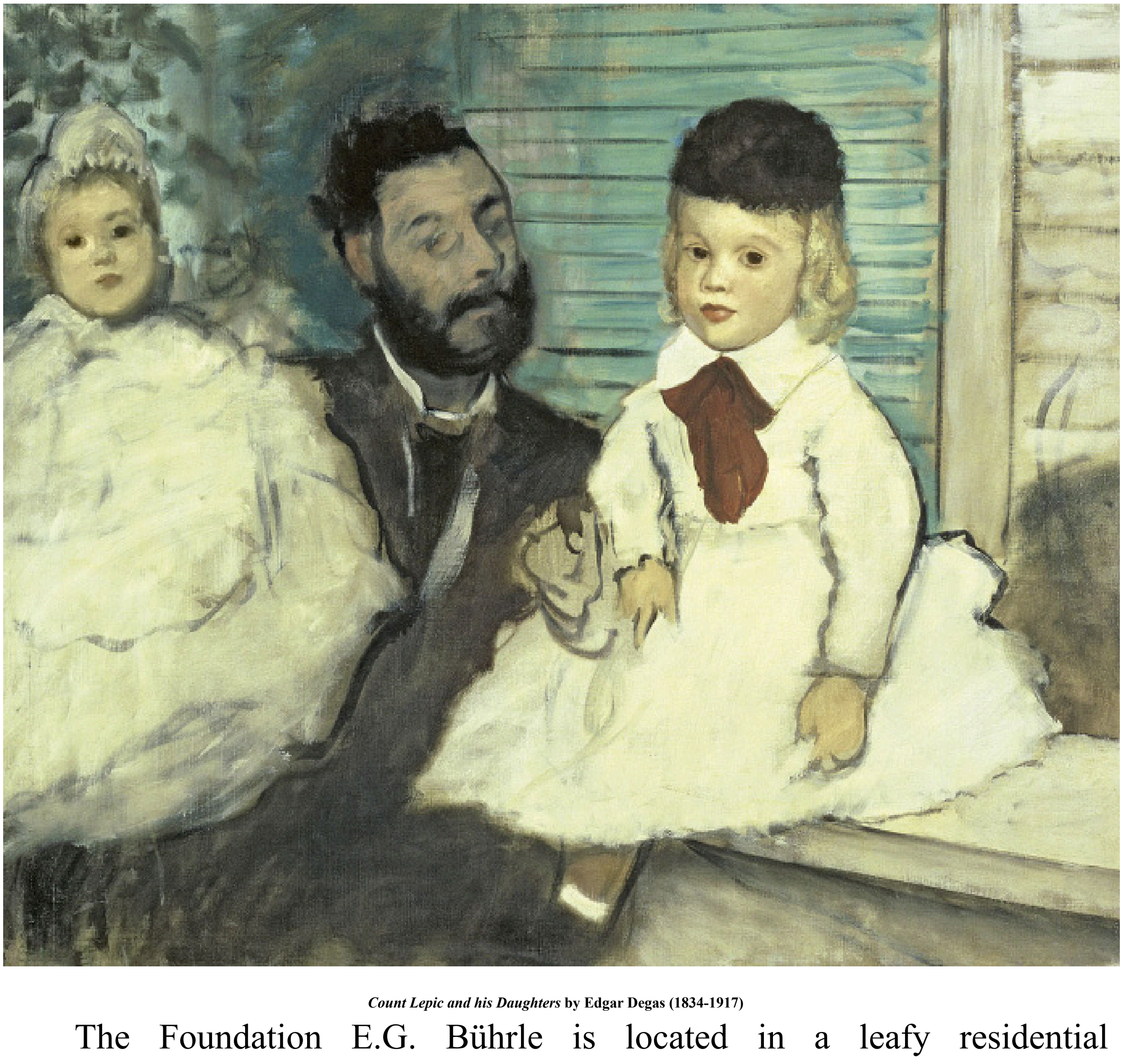
On 17th April 2003 UNESCO organised an emergency meeting to deal with the aftermath of the looting and on 18th April the Baghdad Museum project was formed by the USA to make every effort to recover as much of the material as possible. Items have subsequently been recovered in Iraq, Jordan, Switzerland, the USA and Japan. On 7th June 2003 the treasures of Nimrud were discovered in a bank vault in Iraq’s national bank. By November 2003, only a few dozen of the major pieces and 10,000 minor items remained outstanding.

Private looting of artworks has continued apace since WWII and according to Interpol is accelerating. Small-time thievery increases in a recession and Julian Radcliffe of the ALR reported an upturn in October and November 2008 as the US-credit-crunch-led recession that started in the autumn of 2007 began to filter out from the financials into the wider economy. Major art theft, however, remains constant throughout the economic cycle, and it is hard to know if it is increasing or not. Interpol thinks it is, but Bobby Read, group fine art underwriter at leading art insurer Hiscox, maintains that the internet and better databases have made it more difficult to sell stolen art and has consequently reduced its attractiveness to thieves.

Lynne Chaffinch, who heads the FBI’s Art Theft Program, says, ‘There are no reliable statistics on this, and art crime goes in cycles ... I cannot tell if there is more art theft today or whether it’s just better reported, because there’s a lot more pressure now for museums to be open with the public.’[24] Interpol and the FBI agree that art theft is changing from stealthy robbery at night to brazen daylight hold-ups. As museums responded to night-time thefts with motion detectors, closed-circuit cameras, body heat detectors, and reinforced glass, thieves have responded by going in through the front door with guns in broad daylight. As museums increase their security in one sector, crime migrates to the weakest link.

Security has improved at the leading museums such as the Metropolitan in New York and the National Gallery in London. However, smaller museums cannot afford the best security and are still vulnerable to thieves such as the itinerant Alsatian waiter, Stéphane Breitwieser, who went on a 7-year looting spree, removing 239 objects until a lucky citizen's arrest brought him to justice in late 2001. Breitwieser's taste improved during the course of his thieving, much as a collector learns as he builds his collection. At his trial Breitwieser said, 'By 2001, I would never have considered stealing the objects I stole in 1995 - they were too low quality.'

The top 50 most valuable paintings still missing include works by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Caravaggio, Rubens, Picasso, Renoir, van Gogh and Monet. A recent major robbery of a couple of masterpieces was from the Bührle collection in Zurich in 2009.



Count Lepic and his Daughters **by Edgar Degas (1834-1917)**

The Foundation E.G. Bührle is located in a leafy residential neighbourhood overlooking the lake in Zurich. The collection was amassed by the industrialist Emil Georg Bührle (1890-1956), who had been an art student before WWI and had always wanted to collect art when time and finances allowed. Having made a fortune in the manufacture of anti-aircraft artillery during WWII, Buhrle amassed one of the finest collections of Impressionist and post-Impressionist paintings, mainly between 1945 and 1955, combining considerable purchasing power with a brilliant eye for quality. Bührle lived next to the mansion where he kept his paintings, which now houses the Foundation, and during difficult business situations when he couldn't sleep, he used to go and spend the night in contemplation amongst his paintings.

On 10th February 2008, four paintings worth CHF 180m were stolen by three armed and masked gunmen who forced the tourists and security staff to lie down while they removed the paintings. A Monet and van Gogh were quickly recovered in an abandoned car but the two masterpieces, Cézanne's *The Boy in the Red Waistcoat* and Degas' *Count Lepic and his Daughters* disappeared. 'It's the biggest ever robbery committed in Switzerland and certainly even in Europe,' said Zurich police spokesman Marco Cortesi, adding, 'I think they knew exactly what they wanted to steal because it was over in three minutes. They came in and went directly to the right room and took the four most highly valued pictures…It is one possibility they were stolen to order, but what do you want to do with these pictures at home? Everybody now knows these pictures have been stolen.'[25]

In these comments Cortesi encapsulates what has been puzzling investigators and police forces since WWII. These pictures are too famous to be sold or ever shown to anyone, so why is someone stealing them? Many of the leading robberies appear to be done to order, with thieves leaving other valuables and specifically taking only a couple of the most valuable items. Although in the spring of 2012 there are unconfirmed reports that the Swiss police are close to recovering the two ex-Bührle masterpieces in Serbia, it is odd how many masterpieces simply disappear into thin air with no ransom demand, and rumours of a mastermind collector who steals what he cannot buy on the open market will no doubt continue to circulate.

[1] MacCarthy, Fiona, *Last Curtsey, The End of the Debutantes,* Faber and Faber, 2007, p. 254.

[2] Telephone interview with Julian Radcliffe, 8th December 2008.

[3] Vogel, Carol, 'Lauder Pays US$135m, a Record for a Klimt Portrait', *New York Times,* Art and Design section, 19th June 2006.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] P.R. Newswire on behalf of Baker & McKenzie Amsterdam N.V., 'Goudstikker, At Long Last, Justice', 6th February 2007.

[6] Codevilla, Angelo M., *Between the Alps and a Hard Place, Switzerland in WWII and the Rewriting of History,* Regnery Publishing, 2000, p. 5.

7 Pennacini, Adriano, ed., ‘Cesare Opera Omnia’ in *De Bellum Galliae,* Einaudi, Gallimard Pleicude, 1993, Book 1, Ch. 1, p. 6.

8 Codevilla, *op. cit.,* p. 51.

9 *Ibid.,* p. 60.

10 *Ibid.,* p. 18.

11 *Ibid.,* p. 101.

12 *Ibid.,* p. 11.

13 Castelmur, Dr. L. von, ‘The Washington Agreement of 1946 and Relations between Switzerland and the Allies after WWII’, 12th December 1999, www.swissembassy.org.

14 *Ibid.,* p. 10.

15 Codevilla, *op. cit.,* p. 191.

16 Popper, Nathaniel, ‘WJC Audit: $3 Million Unaccounted For’, *The Forward,* November 2003, 2006, www.forward.com/articles/wjc-audit-4-million-unaccounted-for/.

17 Barkat, Amiram, ‘Members of the Tribe. The End of a Beautiful Friendship’, *Haaretz,* 25th March 2007, www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/841279.html.

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21 Rosenbaum, Lee, ‘Austrian Supreme Court Rejects Bloch-Bauer Heirs for Sixth Klimt’, CultureGrrl, *Arts Journal,* www.artsjounal.com.

22 Rosenthal, Norman, *Art Newspaper,* reproduced in *London Daily Telegraph,* 9th January 2009.

23 *Ibid.*

24 Spiegler, Marc, ‘Busted’, *Art+Auction,* March 2004.

25 ‘Armed Robbers Steal Art Worth CHF 180m’, www.swissinfo.ch, 11th February 2008.

Conclusion

This book has attempted to examine the history of looting in the western world and looks at who were the leading looters through history, what they took and why. While political patriotism has been weakening, cultural patriotism has not. It is now clear that the countries who can lay claim to have suffered most from looting such as Egypt, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Nigeria and Turkey, are not in a position to demand restitution by means of military or political power. There have been a few recent restitution successes, especially for Italy, which has an established court procedure for the trial of persons accused of exporting looted antiquities and an effective and dedicated art recovery unit within its police force.

Many of these looted countries feel cheated by history and a residual anger towards their conquerors and former colonial overlords. Their main losses, particularly in the case of Egypt and Greece, stem from a time when their respective rulers (the Ottomans) had no interest in such matters. As countries often establish their national identity both by their history and their art collections rather than by more mundane political or economic considerations, looting often takes on a significance disproportionate to the events of the past.

Often looting episodes are further complicated by the vagaries of subsequent history. For example, whilst the Greeks bitterly regret the loss of the *Elgin marbles*, which were removed by the British operating under a contract signed by the Ottomans, they also acknowledge it was the British who later helped them cast off their colonial Ottoman masters and obtain independence.

Despite there not having been a World War since the 1940s, the world does not seem any safer for artworks or antiquities and private thefts show no sign of slowing down. Riots in 2011 in the Egyptian capital, Cairo, took place in the square next to the Egyptian museum, much to world consternation, and recent student demonstrations in London resulted in the partial occupation of the National Gallery by protestors. So, in addition to thefts by individuals and looting by armies, works of art also remain vulnerable to spontaneous political discontent.

Likewise, recent turbulence in the Islamic world puts a significant number of the world’s antiquities at risk - already proven by the degradation of the remains of Babylon, firstly by Saddam Hussein and then the US army, and the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Whatever the motivation, art theft has been a fact of life since history began. Human nature doesn’t change and whether one is reading the Greek tragedies, the Bible or Shakespeare, it is clear that people are exactly the same as they always were. Coveting the goods belonging to one’s neighbour, even if expressly forbidden by the Tenth Commandment in the Judaeo/Christian tradition seems to be a basic tenet of human nature and it appears that, as long as man is able, he will be stealing the art that belongs to others.

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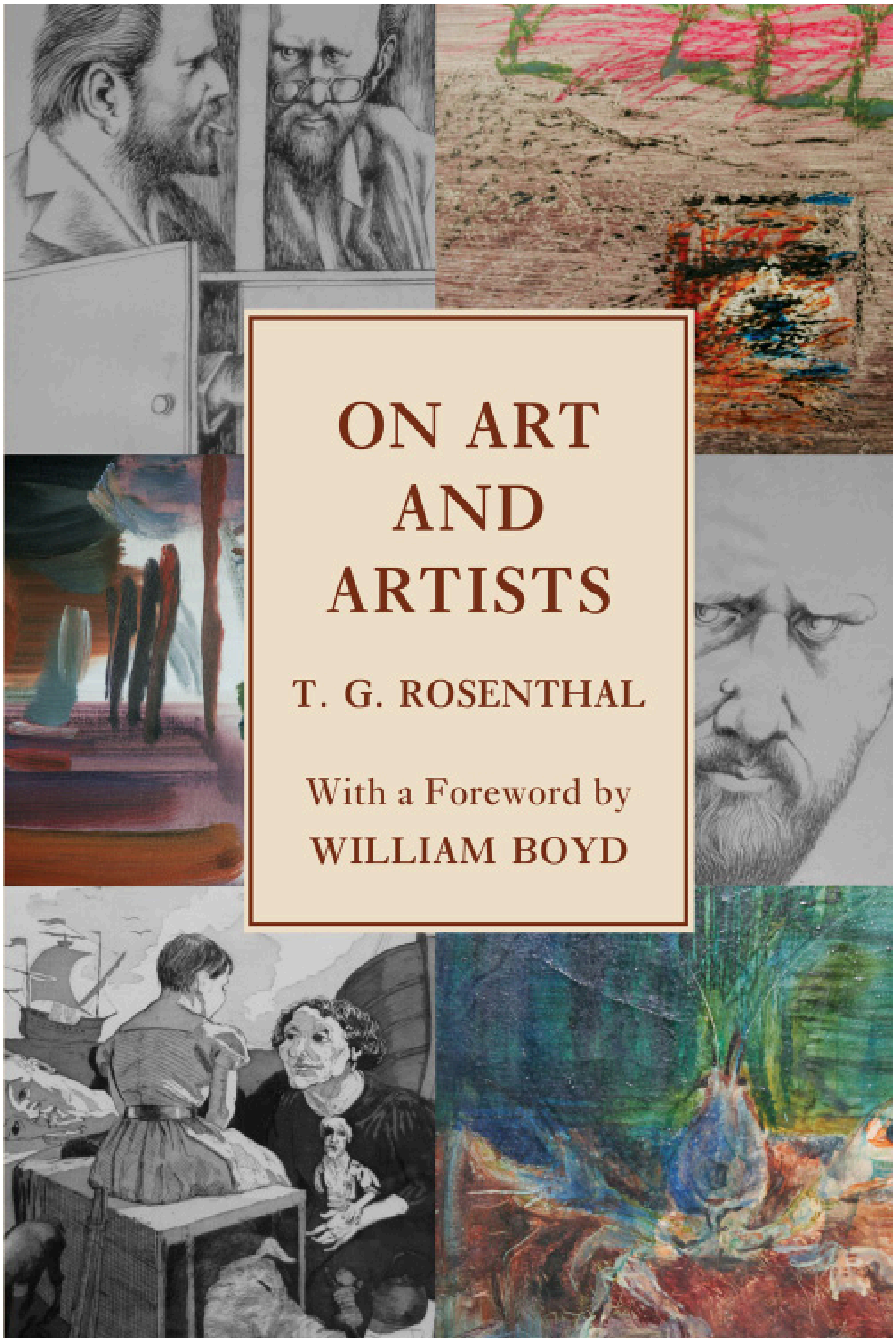

ON ART AND ARTISTS

T. G. ROSENTHAL

With a Foreword by
WILLIAM BOYD

Laurie Lee

Selected Poems

LIONEL

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